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USA Table Tennis Magazine
May/June 2005

Features

Feature Interview with Samson Dubina by Larry Hodges
Arnold Fitness Classic
Greenville Exhibition: This Brave Was Brave! by Scott Press
2004 Ironman Awards by Larry Hodges
USATT Club of the Century: Net & Paddle TTC by Steve Isaacson
In Memoriam: Jimmy McClure by Tim Boggan
USATT League of the Month: Milipitas Sports Center League by Bruce Liu & Mark Johnson
2004 Hall of Fame Inductee: Lily Yip by Tim Boggan
USATT Coaching Seminar by Larry Hodges
USATT Juniors of the Month: The Awesome Alots by Pam Ramsey

Tournaments
International: Safir International, Qatar ITTF Pro Tour
Melkjohn Senior Open - Univ. of PA by Alan Williams
Le Chi/West Covina Open by Alex Chen & Sungill Kim
USA Tournament Writeups & Results

Coaching

Cover Feature: How to Be a Champion
Ten Articles by the Best Coaches and Players in the U.S., plus Waldner’s Tips for Future Champions by Carl Danner, Larry Hodges, Christian Lilherreros, Richard McAfee, Sean O'Neill, Dan Seemiller, Sungill Kim and Jan-Ove Waldner
Tips of the Month by Carl Danner
Basics Corner: The Backhand Drive by Glenn Tepper
The Short Game of Kong Linghui

USATT and Other News
Ad Listing
Short Stuff
Cartoon by Marek Zochowski
President's Report by Sheri Pittman
Treasurer's Report by Tong Lee
Executive Director's Report by Doru Gheorghe
Cartoon by Cartoonjazz.com
Obituaries: Jimmy McClure, Bob Partridge
An Official's View by Azmy Ibrahim
USATT Foundation Report by Neil Smyth
Senior Corner by Olga & Stan Kalat
College Report by Thomas Lackaff
USATT Board Meetings and Votes
USATT Ratings by NATT
USATT Tournament Schedule

On the Cover:
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DONIC star Alexij Smironov (Russia) was victorious at the European Top 12 defeating Olympic Medalist Mikael Maze (Denmark), World Cup Winner Timo Boll (Germany), and former World #1 Vladimir Samsonov (Belarus)!

In addition Dimitrij Ovtcharov (Germany) won the Junior European Top 12 and his DONIC teammate Patrick Baum (Germany) was the runner-up.

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They Said It...
By Larry Hodges

"Off-camera, ping-pong was the sport of choice for the cast and crew of Quentin Tarantino's Kill Bill while they were filming in China." -March, 2005 Premier Magazine.

"My father was a ping-pong champion. He died when the ball got stuck in his throat." -From The Simpsons, March 13, 2005, spoken by Madam Yu, voice of Lucy Liu.


"You have to play ping-pong for 12 hours to lose one pound." -From a bottle cap from a Snapple drink, "Real Fact #167." Is it true?

"Hong Kong's Olympic Silver Medalists in table tennis are auctioning off recently won trophies to raise money for tsunami survivors. Athens doubles partners Li Ching and Ko Lai-Chak will sell their trophies from wins in Slovenia and Croatia, the Hong Kong Table Tennis Association said." -Associated Press, Jan. 28, 2005.


"And Putin plays ping-pong, sending them to the President of CRI Aslan Maskhadov." -Nina Smirnova, in article in Kavkaz-Center News, Feb. 1, 2005. [CRI is Chechen Republic of Ichkeria.]

“I’m not really that bad a table tennis player, am I?” -General Jack O’Neill from TV show Stargate SG-1 in an episode in February, after being told he’s a terrible table tennis player by a barber. Contributed by Barry Margulies.

Ping-Pong for Cancer
Radiant Systems Ping Pong Challenge Benefits Georgia Cancer Foundation

Nearly $27,000 was raised for Georgia Cancer Foundation at Radiant Systems Inc.'s inaugural Ping Pong Challenge held Nov. 4, 2004 at the company's in-house diner in Alpharetta.

Brenda Horne, Executive Director of GCF, said the event was a testament to Radiant Systems’ commitment to the battle against cancer. "It was a stunning offer of generosity on the part of everyone at Radiant," said Horne. "Their contributions will become an integral part of our efforts."

The money was generated by Radiant employees who, by making a donation to GCF, could challenge company co-CEO Erez Goren to a match. Goren, a table tennis enthusiast, won 73 of 78 matches – 93% of his matches. GCF Board Chairman-Elect Chris Lybeer, a vice president at Radiant, was one of the few successful challengers. Hundreds of Radiant employees played, donated money, or cheered on the participants.

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Celebrities Playing Table Tennis
By Larry Hodges

In a moment of total clarity, I realized that what this world needed was a web page devoted to pictures of celebrities playing table tennis. Want to see over 250 celebrities playing our favorite sport? They include some of the most famous (past & present) politicians, athletes, actors, musicians and many others. Here's a very short sampling:

Clintons, Bush, Castro, En-lai, Kerry, Kissinger, Mao, Nixon, Schwarzenegger, Putin, numerous royalty, Agassi, DiMaggio, Drexler, Federer, Foreman, Hingis, Marciano, Roddick, Sharapova, Osmonds, Philbin, Bogart, Chaplin, Connerly, DiCaprio, Mr. Ed (?), Hanks, Matthau, Reeves, Beatles, Cher, many “golden age” actors/actresses, even cartoon characters.

Send your “Celebrities Playing Table Tennis” photos to Larry Hodges at USATT Magazine, 13403 Demetrias Way, Germantown, MD 20874, or email to larry@larrytt.com. You'll get full credit on the page.

www.larrytt.com/celebrities_playing_tt

André Agassi... on the court?
INTERVIEW WITH
SAMSON DUBINA
By Larry Hodges

How did you get started in table tennis?
I was first introduced into table tennis at age 12 when I received a flyer in the mail about table tennis at a local church. I then met the president of the Canton Table Tennis Club, Terri Weaver. Several months later, she invited me to practice at the local table tennis club. After 1 1/2 years, I was still only 1100. Then I started taking some lessons from Carl Hardin and my game soon rose to 2100.

Who have been your coaches?
Carl Hardin, Attila Malek, Dejan Papic, and Enrong Wong.

Describe your playing style.
Aggressive topspin from both sides.

You've been training in Canada for a while. Tell us about that.
Last summer, I was looking for a place to practice. My friend Wemmin Chui suggested that I come to Ottawa, Canada for a two-week training camp. The coaches agreed, so I went there and trained for a few weeks. Then the Canadian coaches and executive director Tony Kiesenhofer invited me back to live. In October, I moved to Canada. I practice with the national team every day; my training partners are Faazil Kassam, BenCe Csaba, Pradeeban Peter-Paul, Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi, Xavier Therien, Paulo Chira, and some others. Players from Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver frequently come to Ottawa for practice. I train with the team 2-3 hours every evening and sometimes five hours on weekends.

I really enjoy playing table tennis. Because of my Christian beliefs, I try to work hard every practice session. In the Bible it says: "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men (Colossians 3:23) I will not always be playing table tennis competitively, but at this season in my life, I would like to see how good I can get. I would like to be able to train in Canada for another year or more. I would really like to live at a training center in the United States with dedicated players who want to practice 5-6 days a week.

What type of things are you working on now?
I am focusing on improving my consistency, serve return, and short game.

What type of physical training do you do?
I usually lift weights twice a week for 40 minutes and run twice a week by myself. Sometimes, the national team does physical training, but it really depends on the upcoming tournament schedule.

Before moving to Canada, how and with who did you train with to reach a high level?
In Ohio, I mainly practiced with my sister. My other practice partners were Junior Schlabach, the Mast family, and the other club members. It was very difficult for me to go higher than 2350 level without a coach and high players to compete against. Most of my good practice came from just playing tournaments.

Tell us about your recent success at the Le Chi/West Covina Open.
When I went to the West Covina tournament, I wasn't expecting to play well so I didn't put pressure on myself. I played more consistent than I had in the past, and that helped me to win most of the close games. [Editor's note - Samson won Under 21 and made the final of Under 2500.]

What's the most improved parts of your game?
I feel that my serve return has tremendously improved in the last couple months. In Ohio, I used to see 2000 level serves; now I am seeing 2700 level serves every day.

What are your goals in table tennis, short-, intermediate- and long-term?
Short-term, I would like to finish in the top eight at the North American Championships next week. (That tournament will be finished before this magazine is published.) I don't have any intermediate goals. Long term, I would like to make the national team.

Do you have any favorite players?
My favorite player is Wang Liqin. I wish that I had the same fond power. I also like watching Kaninikos Kreanga because I think his backhand is entertaining to watch.

Outside of table tennis, what are your interests? What do you do in your free time?
I teach table tennis in school physical education classes. I usually coach four days a week. I really like playing chess too; I have been playing with my dad since I was 5 years old. My toughest competition in Canada is Xavier Therien. I can't even come close to beating him. I also like playing volleyball. My parents were high school coaches, so they started me playing when I was 8 years old. I played volleyball with them almost every day until I turned 15, then I started focusing on table tennis.

Do you have any non-table tennis plans?
I finished paramedic school when I was living in Ohio. It takes several months to take all the paramedic equivalency testing here in Ottawa. I am hoping to start working part-time in the near future as a paramedic. I would be working two 12-hour shifts a week.

Best titles:
- Ohio Men's Champion
- 2002 Junior Olympic Gold Medalist
- 2005 Le Chi/West Covina Under 21 Champion & Under 2500 Runner-up
- 2005 Cleveland Open Elite & Under 21 Champion
- 2005 Rochester Open Champion

Your sister, Amanda, also plays at a high level. Anything to say about her?
When I was living at home, Amanda and I practiced together at least three times each week. But right now, her focus is more on school. She is 19 years old and will be graduating from college next year. I am very proud of her.

Don't you have another sister?
Marissa is 15 years old and is passionate about herpetology and self-defense. Although she is not interested in playing table tennis, she does make me energizing granola bars for tournaments.

Any advice for up-and-coming players?
In the first couple of years, it is very helpful to have a coach in order to develop correct strokes. After a player's strokes are solid, it is very helpful to do random drills, where the player is unsure where the ball is going. Decision-making drills and game situations are always best. Also, players need to play as many tournaments as possible, at least one or two per month. Don't worry about rating! Rating really means NOTHING! If you worry about your rating, you will probably not perform well in tournaments.

Anything else to add?
I want to thank Nittaku and Paddle Palace for being such great sponsors. Hammond is the best rubber in the world. It is fast, with a really high glue effect. I would like to thank the Canadian national team for allowing me, a lower-level American, to be a part of their program. I also really appreciate my family for their encouragement and support. Without them, I would not be playing table tennis. Most importantly, I want to thank God for sending Jesus to earth to die for my sins. He is the one who gives me a reason to live for and the assurance of eternal life in heaven.

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Home Club: Canton TTC
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- **5/28-5/29** Matthew J. Murad Memorial Open - Boyds, MD
- **6/25-6/26** STIGA Open - Easton, PA
- **7/23-7/24** Eastern Open - Piscataway, NJ
- **8/20-8/21** SOCAL Open - San Diego, CA
- **9/15-9/16** Western Open - Stanford, CA
- **10/22-10/23** Lafayette Open - Easton, PA
- **11/5-11/6** San Diego Open - San Diego, CA

### Event Details

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### Sponsors

- San Diego Table Tennis Association
- [www.Senoda.com](http://www.Senoda.com)
- [ping-pong.com](http://ping-pong.com)
- Gerflor
Arnold Fitness Classic
Columbus, OH • March 4-6, 2005
Contributing to the article were
Suzanne Irwin, Mike Styles & Steve Slaback

The annual Arnold Fitness Weekend celebrated thirty years of fitness and fun for the entire family, March 4-6, 2005 in Columbus, Ohio. The weekend packed central Ohio with competitors of every variety and thrilled downtown Columbus business establishments with more than 115,000 visitors who annually fill 50 hotels, and generated $27.5 million for the city of Columbus.

The weekend's inspiration and namesake, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, visited the weekend's 20 competitions. Joining him were many 2004 top Olympians and prior Olympians in the sports of table tennis, fencing, gymnastics, archery, judo, taekwondo, and Olympic weightlifting. Highly recognizable faces at this weekend included film star Wesley Snipes, Scott and Austin Preiss, Jack La Lanne, Kyle Maynard, Franco Columbu, and Lou “The Hulk” Ferrigno.

“We had an incredible line-up of U.S. and international Olympians at the 2005 Arnold Fitness Weekend,” said Columbus resident Jim Lorimer, the weekend’s promoter. “Our guests had the rare opportunity to witness the medal winning talents of many 2004 Olympians.” Among those competing were:

• U.S. gymnastic great Carly Patterson, our nation’s first female All-Around Champion in 20 years;
• World favorite gymnasts Paul Hamm, Morgan Hamm, and three-time Olympian Blaine Wilson;
• 2004 U.S. Archery Team members Vic Wunderle, John Magera, Jennifer Nichols, Stephanie Arnold, Janet Dykman, Kendra Harvery, and Jason McKlrick;
• Taekwondo’s 2004 U.S. Bronze Medalist Greg Baker;
• China’s 2004 Gold Medalists in Olympic Weightlifting, Shi Zhiyong, Zhang Guanghe;
• 2004 U.S. Fencing Olympians, Men’s Saber Team member Ivan Lee, six-time U.S. Olympic Peter Westbrook, three-time Olympian Mika-Ii Sankofa, and Columbus resident Olympic fencer Donald Anthony.

“Renowned champions brought in for the Table Tennis Challenge by Killerspin included 2004 U.S. Olympians Ilija 'Lupi' Lupulescu and Mark Hazinski, and two-time British Olympian Mathew Syed,” added Lorimer.

The weekend’s largest event, the Arnold Fitness EXPO, was held at The Greater Columbus Convention Center. A daily $10 EXPO ticket provided admission to the EXPO and its competitions including the Killerspin Table Tennis Challenge. The 600 booth EXPO featured constant live on-stage entertainment fitness and sport demonstrations, world acclaimed balancing acts, preliminary events in the Strongest Man Contest as well as women’s figure, fitness, and bodybuilding. The EXPO is an incredible venue affording entertainment, elite sport performances, and international array of exhibitors.

“The weekend began in the early 1970’s with a Mr. World Contest in Columbus showcasing one of the top world athletes, a young Austrian bodybuilder who won first place and $500. That victory was later identified by Sports

Continued on page 18
COMETE LINE OF HIGH TECH RUBBERS!

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SPINTECH TABLE TENNIS, INC., 11877 Douglas Road, Suite 102-305, Alpharetta, GA 30005 USA - TEL:(404) 242-7746 - FAX:(770) 667-6898
President's Report
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

With the passing of table tennis icon Jimmy McClure, I'd like to devote much of this issue’s president’s report to recognizing him and his contributions to USATT. In the ongoing “association primer series,” I’d also like to educate the membership on the general relationship between the USTTA Foundation and USATT.

Many will recall the immense financial success of the Olympic Games hosted by Los Angeles in 1984. The marketing genius behind the success, Peter Ueberroth, is the current president of the United States Olympic Committee.

Shortly after the final profits of the 1984 Games were known, Jimmy McClure was appointed to a 5-person USOC committee charged with recommending an appropriate distribution of the multimillion dollar windfall. According to Jimmy, representatives from the large sports had felt that they would receive greater proceeds than the smaller less-known and less-successful sports. They even felt that the committee would rubber-stamp their proposal.

But Jimmy protested and spoke up for all of the other sports. Ultimately, each sport was given roughly $1 million.

As Tim Bogdan recounts in Jimmy’s obituary (see p. 26), as then-USATT president, Tim felt that Jimmy would be the best person to safeguard our association’s windfall. Jimmy established the USTTA Foundation. Having a separate Foundation ensured that USATT would benefit from the windfall through a permanent annual flow of interest proceeds. It also shielded the money from being liquidated to cover USATT obligations, debts, or legal judgments. To bridge the relationship between the national association and the Foundation, USATT accorded the Foundation a seat on the USATT Board of Directors. Until his death, Jimmy McClure was the USTTA Foundation president and USATT Board representative.

Jimmy was rightly very proud of his many contributions, political accomplishments, and athletic achievements. As Jimmy was growing older and older, he maintained his passion for continuing to serve our sport at all levels – within USATT, the USOC and the ITTF. He also chaired both the ITTF Merit Award and USATT Hall of Fame Committees. The ITTF is planning a special commemoration of Jimmy at this year’s World Championships.

Regarding his glory days, I once asked him what he attributed his success to. Jimmy paused and recalled, “After every tournament my parents expected me to tell them how I did. I knew if I lost, they would want an explanation. So when I would play against someone, I’d always say to myself, ‘What reason would I give to my parents if I lost?’ As the match went on, I’d say to myself, ‘There’s no reason I could give for losing to him.’ So, I’d just do my best to win, and I usually did.’

For more details about Jimmy, please read his Hall of Fame profile at www.usatt.org and sign the guestbook at www.caringbridge.org/11/jimmymcclure. Jimmy was rightly very proud of his many contributions, political accomplishments, and athletic achievements. As Jimmy was growing older and older, he maintained his passion for continuing to serve our sport at all levels – within USATT, the USOC and the ITTF. He also chaired both the ITTF Merit Award and USATT Hall of Fame Committees. The ITTF is planning a special commemoration of Jimmy at this year’s World Championships.

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Congratulations to Dell Sweers and his wife, who have been selected to succeed Jimmy as the Foundation president. Dell was also selected by the Foundation to fill its allocated USATT Board seat. Dell’s table tennis achievements and contributions have spanned decades – as a former champion player and coach, husband of Ping Pong Diplomacy participant Connie and father of Olympian and former USATT Board member Todd. Dell formerly served on USATT’s Board and we welcome his return.

Congratulations also to Steve Isaacson who has been appointed the new USATT Hall of Fame Chairman. One of the objectives Steve has already stated that he would like to achieve is to have a dedicated table tennis exhibition in the proposed National Sports Museum in New York City. USATT asks all of our treasured champions and aficionados to consider donating your special trophies, medals and memorabilia for the cause of ultimately having our very own Hall of Fame collection.

Please read the accompanying Executive Director’s report by Doru Gheorghe. It provides an update of recent USATT activities and accomplishments. I’d like to add my congratulations to Gao Jun and Adam Hugh for winning, respectively, the North American Women’s Singles and Junior Boys titles. Congratulations also to Stephanie Shih, Elena Sowers, Jeff Huang and Steven Chang for qualifying to participate in the World Cadet Challenge Cup.

Please also review the Treasurer’s Report for an overview of USATT’s 2004 financial status. As the report alludes to, the arbitration matter between USATT and Killerspin has not yet been resolved.

As always, I thank the many contributors who are working hard to spearhead USATT’s projects and initiatives. If you are willing to volunteer your expertise and/or time, please contact Doru or me.
The 2005 U.S. Open is approaching and I would like to remind you to send your entry forms before the deadline. You do not want to miss the opportunity to watch in action the top players in the world competing for a total of $100,000. A USATT member came up with the idea to have the top players in the world entered in the U.S. Open play with our members for a couple of minutes and I would like to have your feedback and/or interest on this idea before I start contacting the players. I can’t guarantee that the top players would be interested in this idea, but I’ll try if there is any interest on your side.

By the time you read this report you probably will have received the entry form. If you did not, please call USATT headquarters at 719-866-4583.

After the U.S. Open, USATT will organize a summer training camp for our junior and cadet national teams. Players from Canada and possibly Latin America will join us in the camp. We expect to have over 30 players and seven coaches in the camp.

This is the first year that we organized this summer camp. Next year we will try to organize two summer camps: one for cadet and junior national teams and one for young promising USA players. This will help our young players develop and get used to professional training.

The National, Junior and Cadet Teams participated in the North American Championships which was held in Canada, Montreal, March 25-26. Gao Jun won women’s singles and qualified for the World Cup to be held in China in October. In cadet events, Stephanie Shih, Elena Sowers, Jeff Huang, and Steven Chan qualified for the World Cadet Challenge Cup to be held in Dominican Republic in October. The World Cadet Challenge Cup is a tournament where the participants represent their continent in team events and gain points for their continent in individual events. The North American continental team will be composed of two USA and two Canadian players of each gender.

Other USA players who won events are Gao Jun/Jasna Reed in women’s doubles, and Adam Hugh in junior singles. For full results go to www.usatt.org and see the news item.

The National Team will participate at the World Championships in Shanghai, China, April 30 – May 6. Competing for USA will be:

Women’s Team: Gao Jun, Jasna Reed, Tawny Bahn, Jackie Lee and Lily Yip;

Men’s Team: Cheng Yinghua, David Zhuang, Ilija Lupulesku, Khoa Nguyen and Han Xiao

We wish all of them Good Luck in the competition!

Regarding the project of forming state associations, we plan to have the guidelines in place by September of this year.

United States Olympic Committee scheduled a review with all National Governing Bodies to analyze all aspects of activities and programs, governance, elite athlete development, coaching certification and education program, management, fundraising, sponsorship, in order to decide on base funding allocation for 2005. USATT had the review on March 14, and we are waiting for the U.S. Olympic Committee Board of Directors decision.

USATT members and their families get a 25% discount on all La Quinta, Baymont and Woodfield Hotels. For reservation call 800-531-5900 (La Quinta and Woodfield) or 866-464-2335 (Baymont) and ask for US Table Tennis preferred rates. For more information about benefits offered by the hotels see www.usatt.org/news1/2005_hotel_discounts.shtml.

If you have any questions you can contact me by email at ed@usatt.org or by phone at 719-866-4583 ex.3.
This Brave Was Brave!

By Scott Preiss, U.S. National Coach and Trainer • www.pingponglive.com

My son Austin and I recently performed a table tennis exhibition for the Calagor Medical Supply company during their Southeast Sales Conference in Greenville, South Carolina. Austin and I had the chance to wow the 300 or so sales staff during the day, and in the evening we had the chance to pong out on seven tables with the staff. My son Austin and I also had the chance to meet former Atlanta Braves pitcher Jose Alvarez, who played for the Braves in the late 1980’s. Jose was anxious to play Austin who recently captured the 10 and under national title in Las Vegas. Jose is a terrific athlete and has his mind set on making the PGA Senior Golf Tour in a few years.

Jose had not lost a ping-pong game in many years until this day. With his two boys Sevi and Austin (a different Austin!) looking on, Jose battled with Austin to no avail. He simply could not return Austin’s wicked sidespin serves and heavy topspin loops. After hanging around the table during the cocktail hour, Jose tried again and again to beat Austin and when he came up empty, he invited us to play golf with him the next day.

After a wonderful day of golf Jose told Austin and I that he would take us to the airport but first would show us his house in the country. As we pulled up to the five or six acre property I noticed a four-car garage. One could already guess that he had a ping-pong table in the garage. He wanted one more chance to beat Austin, this time on his home court and in his garage. With his son heckling Jose that he could not return Austin’s serve, Jose battled but Austin pulled it out, 11-7. Game over. Great friendship made.

I want to thank Larry Hodges and USA Table Tennis for their support and In Any Event Promotion Company for hiring Austin and I to demonstrate one of the most amazing sports a human can play.
Title Sponsor:
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金門杯 Metropolitan Open Team
Table Tennis Championships
USATT 4 Star Sanctioned (Sept. 3-4, 2005)
SUNY Rockland Community College Field House
145 College Road, Suffern, New York 10901

TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE: Lily Yip, Earl Connell

REFERREES: Y.C. Lee, IR, Yang Shao Min, IJU

EQUIPMENT: Double Fish Tables, Nets & 3 star 40mm orange balls.

ENTRY DEADLINES: Teams entered by May 15, 2005 will pay the Early Bird Entry Fee posted on the Events Chart. There will be a $25 additional charge per team entered after May 15, 2005. After July 10, 2005 the additional charge will be $50 per team. All Entries Must Include Full Payment and All USATT laws and regulations apply.

FORMAT: All events will start at 9:00Am Saturday morning. Each team will consist of 3 to 5 players. Only 3 players may compete in any team tie. Teams entering the Super Division event will be allowed only one player over 2450 to play in any tie, the two other players must be rated under 2450. Teams entering in the rating events must have all players under the event rating cutoff. All teams will play in round robin groups of no more than 8 teams. All team ties will be best 5 of 9 matches. Each individual match will be best 3 of 5 games, each game to 11 points. The tournament committee reserves the right to modify the format or cancel events due to insufficient entries.

ELIGIBILITY: All players must be USATT members or members of an ITTF affiliated association. Bring your membership card or receipt. Non-members MUST join USATT at the tournament. USATT membership: $40/yr, $100/3yr for adults; $20 for juniors; $60/yr for household (2 adults + minors). Adult players who have never been USATT members may purchase a One-Time Tournament Pass for $10. Players ratings will be based on the July, August 2005 issue of the USATT magazine. The tournament committee reserves the right of acceptance or refusal of all tournament entries.

Directions: Take the NY Thruway and take Exit 14B (Airmont). Turn on Airmont Road (right if coming from south and left if coming from north) which becomes Highview Road. Turn left at 4th stoplight, onto College Road. Follow College Road and turn left onto campus at main entrance

INFORMATION: Contact: Lily Yip at Tel. 732-748-9712, Email atlanta56@msn.com Website: www.doublefish-us.com
Send entries and payment to: Lily Yip Sports Inc., 14 Dock Watch Hollow Road, Warren, NJ 07059

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($300E) - 1st Place will receive Double Fish Equipment (valued at $300)

US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 2: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 3: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 4: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 5: Address

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

Team Entry Fee: 1 agree to comply with all tournament regulations. I accept full responsibility for my participation and relieve all sponsors, USITTA and all tournament officials of any liabilities for injury to myself or my property. I agree to abide by all decisions of the tournament officials.

Rating Email:

Player 2: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 3: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 4: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 5: Address

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

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Player 2: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 3: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 4: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 5: Address

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

Rating Email:

Player 2: Address
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Player 3: Address
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US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 5: Address

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Player 2: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 3: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 4: Address
US ATT# Exp.Date Rating Email:
Player 5: Address

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** Corrections

In the U.S. Nationals write-up last issue, the Nittaku logo was left out of the sponsor logos listed on page 34. Nittaku was the official ball sponsor for the USA Nationals as well as the U.S. Open.

The names of Felipe Pigao and Joe Yick were inadvertently omitted from the list on page 22 of those who had received the Dr. Michael J. Scott, Jr. Award. Felipe Pigao of New York City was in fact the first recipient of this distinguished award at the 1996 U.S. Open. Joe Yick won the award at the 2004 U.S. Open.

** Carol M. White

** Physical Education Grant

By Kampol Suraphlouchai

The San Antonio Independent School District received in the fall of 2004 a three-year grant from the United State Department of Education for Physical Education known as the Carol M. White Physical Education Program or PEP Grant. This program is designed to assist local educational agencies and nonprofit, community-based organizations to initiate, expand, or improve physical education programs, including after-school programs, for students in one or more grades from kindergarten through 12th grade in order to help students make progress toward meeting state standards for physical education.

Using the funds provided, the San Antonio Independent School District has chosen to be aggressive in implementing a strong physical education program to help fight obesity and diabetes. Goals were set using National Institute of Health standards and activities were chosen based on MVPA (Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity) and willingness of outside organizations wanting to help students achieve the district's goals.

A NGB (National Governing Body), USA Table Tennis, has showed enthusiasm in the development of the children by pledging their cooperation. Many outside programs come in with set agendas. USA Table Tennis comes with an open mind realizing that they are working in the education world now where different standards are needed and apply.

USA Table Tennis and the San Antonio Independent School District will work together in the training of teachers, coaches, and development of after school programs and leagues.

San Antonio Independent School District has worked developing another sport with the Community Olympic Development Program and the San Antonio Sports Foundation with much success. Priority will now be shifted to Table Tennis to assist students to reach their MVPA goals and developing programs. Working together is key. Thinking students first and not self-agendas is the formula to success with school districts.

SAISD and USA Table Tennis both agree with, "Students First." 

** 2004 World Masters Games

By Richard McAfee, ITTF Technical Delegate

The Table Tennis World is coming to Edmonton, Canada this summer for the 2005 World Masters Games. They will join an expected 16,000 plus Masters Athletes, aged 35 and up, in completing in the largest multi-sport competition on the planet. All table tennis events will be held in the Kinsmen Sport Centre Field House from Saturday, July 23 to Saturday, July 30, 2005. The Kinsmen Sport Centre features wood flooring and excellent lighting and has hosted such table tennis events as the Commonwealth Games. Players will compete on International Standard Equipment supplied by Butterfly.

The City of Edmonton is well known for hosting outstanding sporting events and the International Table Tennis Association is proud to be a "core member" of the World Masters Games. I would like to urge all Masters Age Athletes to take part in this once in a lifetime competition and to enjoy the hospitality of this great city.

More information can be found on their website at www.2005worldmasters.com. [Note – see ad in this issue.]

**Most Wins in 2004**

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<td>20.</td>
<td>Runyan, Trevor</td>
<td>CA</td>
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**2004 Iron Man Awards**

By Larry Hodges

David Jarrin played 309 USATT tournament matches (rated singles matches only) in 2004 to just edge out fellow Marylander Julian Waters (296) to end Julian's 2-year "Ironman" string. However, for the third straight year, Julian had the most wins, with a 232-64 record for the year. Once again, Marylanders dominated, with the top three spots in total matches, and six of the top nine, as well as the top spot in total wins, and five of the eight spots there as well. Indiana's A.J. Brewer, age 11, who was runner-up in both categories last year, again was edged out, finishing fourth and third respectively this year with a 163-91 record.

Among the top 20 finishers, probably the most impressive record was Li Yuxiang of NY, who went 105-13 (89.0%) for the year. Others over 80% were Lukasz Fita (IL, 109-22, 83.2%) and Kit Jeerapaei (FL, 160-36, 81.6%), with four others just missing it: Lily Yip (NJ, 106-27, 79.7%), Petra Sestakova (IL, 168-44, 79.2%), Patrick Lui (MD, 144-38, 79.1%), and Julian Waters (MD, 232-64, 78.4%).

**Most Matches in 2004**

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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Record</th>
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<td>Jarrin, David</td>
<td>MD</td>
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<td>Lui, Patrick</td>
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**2005 World Masters Games**

By Richard McAfee, ITTF Technical Delegate

The Table Tennis World is coming to Edmonton, Canada this summer for the 2005 World Masters Games. They will join an expected 16,000 plus Masters Athletes, aged 35 and up, in completing in the largest multi-sport competition on the planet. All table tennis events will be held in the Kinsmen Sport Centre Field House from Saturday, July 23 to Saturday, July 30, 2005. The Kinsmen Sport Centre features wood flooring and excellent lighting and has hosted such table tennis events as the Commonwealth Games. Players will compete on International Standard Equipment supplied by Butterfly.

The City of Edmonton is well known for hosting outstanding sporting events and the International Table Tennis Association is proud to be a "core member" of the World Masters Games. I would like to urge all Masters Age Athletes to take part in this once in a lifetime competition and to enjoy the hospitality of this great city.

More information can be found on their website at www.2005worldmasters.com. [Note – see ad in this issue.]
SO. FL. US OPEN WARM UP TOURNAMENT
Sanctioned by U.S.A.T.T.
Co sponsored by Newgy Industries, Total Bank, CSCCA, IRSI

WHEN: Saturday and Sunday, July 2 & 3, 2005
WHERE: Coral Springs Gymnasium
: 2501 Coral Springs Drive, Coral Springs, FL 33071
DEADLINE: Entries must be received by Sat, June 16, 2005.
COMMITTEE: Marty Prager Director, Referee Terese Terranova IU, Carolyn Huang, Hong Chow, Lily Miao
EQUIPMENT: Stiga + Spintech tables + nets, Nittaku 3 star 40mm yellow balls, wood gym floor
RULES: All USATT rules will apply. RR's 3 of 5, semi + final of #1 4 of 7. Players must be USATT / ITTF member (adult $40 Jr. $20). All foreign ratings over 8 mos old subject to revision. Director may modify, seed out or cancel events. Unrated players will not advance from round robin rating events. Please check in at least ½ hr. before event starts in case of time changes.

POLICIES / INFO: Refunds will be given 1 week prior to tournament. No shows no refunds. Phone entries will be put on a list and entered upon availability. Entry + hotel info listed on website sftto.org

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Some events might carry to Sunday. *Event #1+2 must be over 1800 or discretion of director. **Event #21 top player can't be higher than 1800. Players can only enter one event that starts at the same time.

Make checks payable to: Marty Prager, 2681 E. Marina Dr. Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312
NAME__________________________________________________________ADDRESS__________________________________________________________CITY____________________STATE________ZIP______________________Club Name__________________________________________________________AGE____________DATE-of-BIRTH____________RATING____________EX. DATE____________Email__________________________________________________________

Please register me in the following events circled below
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
Doubles Partners: 3600_________________________4200_________________________

I agree to comply with all USATT rules. I accept full responsibility for my participation and relieve the sponsors and USATT of any liability for injury to myself or damage to my property or lost items.
SIGNATURE__________________________________________________________Tele. ________________

Entry Fee $__________Reg. Fee $__________Rating Fee$ 4.00
Mem. Fees$__________TOTAL $__________
"Club of the Century?!?"

By Steve Isaacson

Nearly every issue of this magazine features a "USATT Club of the Month," and I look forward to each article. This month, however, I would like to present my nominee for "Club of the Century!!" Yes ... I know that's a bit presumptuous, but just as there were the 1957 Yankees and the 1940 Chicago Bears, (winning NFL Championship 73-0) there was also the unparalleled Net and Paddle Club of Chicago!

The Net and Paddle Club was opened in the late 1940's at 1026 W. Wilson, on Chicago's north side. The original owners were Dick and Peggy Ichkoff along with Allan and Betty Levy, who ran the club until it was taken over by former St. Louis star Mildred Shahian. The club remained at the same address until the late 1960's and Millie, who had won the English Open, two U.S. Opens, and was on the 1949 World Championship Team, was in charge ... and I do mean IN CHARGE!!

Membership was $15 per month and the club was open every day of the week ... weekdays from 6:00 and weekends all day. There were several major tournaments each year, including the Illinois Open, the Western Open, the Central Open, and the National Team Championships for both men and women. Playing conditions were perfect ... with permanent cloth barriers and great lighting. Soft drinks were available and there was a TV set, several couches, dressing rooms and paddles for sale. (Hoeks were $3.00 ... Maccrossens were $5.00.) There were several restaurants and four kinds of public transportation within one block! (Train, bus, streetcar, elevated.) A Friday night tournament, with a $10 first prize, could be as hard to win as a U.S. Open ... harder if Richard Bergmann or Dal-Joon Lee happened to be passing through with the Harlem Globetrotters.

As Norbert Van De Walle was being inducted into the U.S. Table Tennis Hall of Fame last December, it occurred to me that he would surely be the last Hall of Fame inductee from the old Net and Paddle Club and after a little research I was shocked to discover that he is the tenth club member to be enshrined!!

USATT Hall of Fame Members From Chicago's Net and Paddle Club

| Peggy Ichkoff | 1970 | Erwin Klein | 1981 |
| Sally Green Prouty | 1979 | Mildred Shipman | 1984 |
| Bill Holzrichter | 1980 | John Read | 1989 |
| Mildred Shahian | 1980 | Steve Isaacson | 1994 |
| Bernie Bukiet | 1981 | Norbert Van De Walle | 2004 |

Not enough for the club of the century? How about 27 members ranked at least once in the top ten in the United States? (If I listed all the net and paddlers ranked in the top 20 I would use up this entire magazine!)

Bob Anderson | Erwin Klein | Keith Porter |
| Herb Aronson | Jackie Koehnke | Marvin Prager |
| Carolyn Wilson Bast | Sharon Koehnke | Sally Green Prouty |
| Ralph Bast | Dan Kreer | Mary Jane Schatke |
| Bernie Bukiet | Allan Levy | Mildred Shahian |
| Bill Holzrichter | Ralph Muchow | Mildred Shipman |
| Peggy Ichkoff | Irene Ogus | Norbert Van De Walle |
| Steve Isaacson | Dan Pecora | Laszlo Varenyi |
| Marge Kulman | Pat Pecora | V. Lee Webb |

Still not convinced? How about five of the top ten women in the United States? Twice!! 1952 ... Peggy Ichkoff, Mildred Shahian, Carolyn Bast, Sharon Koehnke, Mildred Shipman. 1953 ... Peggy Ichkoff, Sally Prouty, Mildred Shahian, Sharon Koehnke, Mildred Shipman. And ... four of the top ten men in the United States ... Twice!! 1956 ... Bernie Bukiet, Marvin Prager, Norbert Van De Walle, Steve Isaacson (Actually five if you count future net and paddle Erwin Klein) and 1957 ... Bukiet, Van De Walle, Prager and Allan Levy.

And I have mentioned those net and paddlers who were ranked first in the United States in men's singles or women's singles?

Men | Women
---|---
1943...Bill Holzrichter | 1940...Sally Green Prouty
1950...Bill Holzrichter | 1941...Sally Green Prouty
1956...Erwin Klein | 1942...Sally Green Prouty
1957...Bernie Bukiet | 1943...Sally Green Prouty
1961...Erwin Klein | 1944...Sally Green Prouty
1963...Bernie Bukiet | 1954...Mildred Shahian
1964...Erwin Klein | 1962...Mildred Shahian
1965...Erwin Klein | 1970...Irene Ogus
1966...Bernie Bukiet | 1970...Irene Ogus

I walked by the Net and Paddle Club the other day. There's a bank parking lot at 1026 Wilson. People walk by without a glance, totally unaware that 50 years ago this was the hub of an American sport ... the Club of the Century!!
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18761-Q Frederick Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20879 • (301) 519-8580 • www.mdttc.com

Butterfly

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3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

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• Minimum deposit: $50
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• Holiday Inn, 301-948-8900
One mile away, at the intersection of Frederick Rd. and Montgomery Village Ave.
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Coach Cheng Yinghua
• Current & 4-time U.S. Men's Singles Champion
• Member, USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame
• 2000 Olympic Team Member
• #1 Ranked U.S. Player for most of the past 12 years
• Former Head Coach for the Szechuan Province of China
• Chinese National Team, 1977-87
• 1985 & 1993 U.S. Open Men's Champion
• USATT's Coach of the Year, 1996
• Butterfly-sponsored full-time coach
• Certified by USATT as a National Coach

Coach Jack Huang
• Former Head Coach for the Guangxi Province of China
• Chinese National Team, 1976-83
• U.S. #1 Player in 1990
• Former U.S. Senior and Men's Doubles Champion
• USATT's Developmental Coach of the Year, 1997
• Butterfly-sponsored full-time coach
• Certified by USATT as a National Coach

Coach Larry Hodges
• Author of Table Tennis: Steps to Success
• USATT's Developmental Coach of the Year, 2002
• Director/Manager/Coach at Resident Training Program for Table Tennis at Olympic Training Center, 1985-89
• Many-time U.S. Junior Team Coach
• Certified by USATT as a National Coach
• USATT Coaching Chairman, 1991-95
• Former full-time coach
• Member, USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame

Butterfly 40mm Training Balls are the Official Ball of the Maryland Table Tennis Center

Butterfly

Name: Phone: Age/DOB:
Address:
Rating:
Amount Enclosed: $
Qatar ITTF Pro Tour
Doha, Qatar • Feb. 21-25, 2005

Men’s Singles – Final: Wang Liqin (CHN) d. Ma Lin (CHN), 8,10,6,8,9; SF: Wang Liqin d. Timo Boll (GER), 13,11,4,5,10; Ma d. Adrian Crisan (ROU), 10,9,4,6; QF: Wang Liqin d. Chuan Chih-Yuan (TPE), 8,9,5,8,9.

Boll d. Lars Hilgers (GER), 8,6,2,6,9; Crisan d. Wang Hao (CHN), -10,-3,8,-7,9,11,9; Ma d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 6,9,-11,1,5,1,8; 8ths: Wang Liqin d. Koro Fuji, 4,11,9,5; Chuan d. Zoltan Fejer-Konnerth (GER), 6,2,11,12; Hilgers d. Peter Karlsson (SWE), -5,8,-7,9,7,7; Boll d. Ko Lai Chak (HKG), 9,8,-5,7,7; Wang Hao d. Chen Weixing (AUT), 6,9,5,8; Crisan d. Bartosz Such (POL), 6,9,3,3; Ryu d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 9,6,9,5; Ma d. Jian-Ove Waldner (SWE), 1,4,10,13,10.

Men’s Doubles – Final: Kong Linghui/Wang Hao (CHN) d. Ma Lin/Chen Weixing (CHN), 8,10,6,8,9; SF: Kong/Wang d. Fedor Kuzmin/Alexandre Sermon (RUS), -12,-6,8,8,10,5; Ma/Chen d. Ryu Seung Min/Leung Chun Yan (KOR/ HKG), 6,5,8,-7,7; QF: Kuzmin d. Ko Lai Chak/Li Ching (HKG), 7,8,10,6; Kong/Wang d. Chen Weixing/Karl Jindrak (AUT), 8,7,8,8; Leung/ Ryu d. Lars Hilgers/Jorg Rosskopf (GER), 6,1,6,6,8; Ma/Chen d. Jan-Ove Waldner/Jorgen Persson (SWE), -4,9,9,7,5.

Women’s Singles – Final: Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Wang Nan (CHN), 5,6,10; SF: Zhang Yining d. Niu Jianfeng (CHN), 5,5,5,9; Wang d. Guo Kun Yieh (AOR), 5,6,7,6,7; Wang d. Zhang Rui (HKG), 4,10,5,9; ‘8ths: Zhang Yining d. Mikie Viktorinov (JPN), 19,4,10,13,10; Steff d. Tie Yiane (HKG), 7,4,9,7,6,10,4; Pavlovic d. Tamara Boros (HRV), 11,5,8,10,11; Niu d. Saki Kazama (JPN), 10,10,5,14,9,7; Guo d. Ling Hang (HKG), -5,4,8,7,2,6; Kim d. Tatyana Kostromina (BLR), 9,9,9,7,7; Zhang Rui d. Wenling Tan (CHN), 7,8,7; Wang d. Song Ah Sim (HKG), -10,-7,8,7,9,5, SF: Niu Jianfeng d. Zhang Yining (CHN), 8,10,6.-11,8. QF: Zhang Yining d. Mihaela Steff (ROU), 4,5,-10,9,9; Waldner/Jorgen Persson (SWE). -4,9,9,7,7; Batorfi/Toth d. Wang Nan/Zhang Yining (CHN), -8,-9,6,12,9,9, QF: Wang/Zhang d. Cornelia Vaida/Adriana Zamfir (HRV/ROU), 6,9,2,2; Batorfi/Toth d. Kim Hyang Mi Kim Jong (PRK), 6,7,8,6; Kostromina/Pavlovic d. Hiroko Fujii/Aya Umemura (JPN), 7,7,4,9; Guo/Niu d. Tamara Boros/Mihaela Steff (HRV/ROU), 4,7,3,7,8.

Safir International
Orebro, Sweden • Feb. 23-27, 2005

By Larry Hodges (also contributing was Sean O’Neill)

TK Safir held its 33rd annual Safir International in Orebro, Sweden on Feb. 23-27 with a field of 682 players representing 87 clubs from over 25 countries.

This was the third time the tournament was recognized as part of the ITTF World Junior Circuit. In addition to outstanding competition the ITTF hosted a 3-day training camp in Koping leading up to the event.

USA Table Tennis Association (USATT) funded by USA Table Tennis purposefully invited the US to compete in the 18-under and 21-under divisions.

As an international event, the USA Team was able to experience a level of competition that was more challenging than it had ever seen before. The team was comprised of the top 8 players from the United States: Jessica Chun, Brittany Wu, Maria Toom, Robin Chang, Megan Tazeglu, Kelly Gray, and Leslie Lim. The USA Team was led by Coach Greg Vlahos.

The USA Team participated in the 18-under and 21-under divisions. In the 18-under division, the USA Team finished in 7th place overall. In the 21-under division, the USA Team finished in 5th place overall.

The USA Team members who competed in the 18-under division were Jessica Chun, Brittany Wu, Maria Toom, and Robin Chang. Jessica Chun finished in 1st place, while Brittany Wu finished in 3rd place.

The USA Team members who competed in the 21-under division were Jessica Chun, Brittany Wu, Maria Toom, and Robin Chang. Jessica Chun finished in 1st place, while Brittany Wu finished in 3rd place.

The USA Team was able to learn valuable lessons from this experience. They were able to experience the thrill of competition at a higher level and were able to gain experience in a different culture.

In conclusion, the USA Team had an excellent experience at the Safir International. They were able to compete at a higher level and were able to gain valuable experience. They look forward to competing in similar tournaments in the future.
History of U.S. Table Tennis


"The Stagnant Years: Unless our USTTA E.C. ‘can clearly see the desires of the players they represent,’ there will be no progress.”

BY TIM BOGGAN
USATT HISTORIAN

U.S. Team to the 1969 Munich World’s

Also Available
Vol. II (1940-52, 395 pages, 320 photos)
Vol. III (1953-62, 450 pages, 400 photos)

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Please allow three weeks for delivery. *Includes shipping and handling

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Circle Volumes Ordered
Vol. I Vol. II
Vol. III Vol. IV
In Memoriam

James Hodgson “Jimmy” McClure
(1916-2005)

By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

When Jimmy died, shortly after I’d talked by phone with him in the hospital and he thought, and his wife Nell thought, and I thought from the sound of his voice, he was getting better (from where, how and why, had the pneumonia surprisingly come?), I, in my 75th year, as was happening more and more, became intensely aware of my own mortality. So, in a sense, Jimmy meant more to me in death than in life.

Years ago when I was USSTTA President and Jimmy was on the E.C. with me, I’d of course call him from time to time, and he’d always answer with a “Yes, Tim?” As if he were all ears about what I had to say to him—though I knew he felt, as I did (even though I tried to fight against it) that the Association wasn’t really progressing as I’d hoped it would. That “Yes, Tim?” always bothered me, for while it showed you could count on Jimmy being duty-minded, it also, though ostensibly paying deference to one in charge, more suggested to me the opposite—conveyed Jimmy’s strong personal conviction that, as he once said to me, “We [the E.C.] don’t know what we’re doing.”

So I’ve always felt that, inside, Jimmy was his own man—and very strong in his own beliefs and practices. Another way of noting this was obvious: in a sport where so many looked to others for help, Jimmy, then, could convey where he was and what he had been with just a simple action or a word or two. Repeatedly over the years I’d ask him, the more so because he was by then in his 80’s and starting to use a cane, “How you doin’, Jimmy?” And repeatedly he’d reply in a brisk, matter of fact way, the two-word lift of it on the rise, “Pretty good.” Until one day last fall I asked him how he was doing, and he said, “Fair.” That “Fair” was startling to me, ominously so.

I really knew Jimmy only casually, though the more when I came to join him as he served his last years on the USATT Board of Directors. What I most admired about him in his old age was his energy, and, even more, his determination. Though increasingly in pain he persevered in taking trips not only to various parts of the U.S., but on at least two occasions went abroad. Most people that age didn’t want to go anywhere—at least not if they had to take long, grueling flights alone. And even of course whenever he got to his destination, he had to work, to think. His USOC and USATT positions demanded it, as did his own pride and integrity.

I’m an inveterate early riser, and rather soon after I’d opened the coffee shop at whatever hotel we’d be staying at, Jimmy would come in. We’d chat and I’d again have the opportunity to see his point of view on this or that, this time more straightforwardly, for he knew me better. We were so different in some ways, most notably perhaps with regard to money. I’m somewhat of a spendthrift (though never an impulse buyer)—never know what anything costs and don’t care if maybe I’m strapped. Jimmy of course was just the opposite. “This year,” he’d let Steve Isaacson and me know, “the Stratosphere raised the Hall of Fame Banquet price for the chicken dinner $2. Maybe we should look into going somewhere else.” Which would cause Steve and me to roll our eyes to the Vegas stars.

But frugality was a way of life for Jimmy. And I knew it. So when I was President those many years ago, and the USSTTA got that $1,000,000 plus windfall from the Olympic Games, and I was besieged with people who wanted to handle that money, I knew damn well that the safest place for it was with McClure.

I much appreciated it that Jimmy cared about my History books, and that, though he’d provided me with his best historic photos, he, without prompting, without hesitation, would write a check for each volume. Never for a moment did he intimate that he looked for a free book. Though all checks were important to me, because Jimmy’s natural frugality, his check was something special. He also diplomatically made it clear that he liked one book better than another. Of course I knew their strengths and weaknesses too. But all that was o.k., for I had personal commitments to match, had to keep going.

Would that I could keep going, for so long...like Jimmy.

Thumbnail summary of Jimmy’s accomplishments:

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

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

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

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

1939: After good showing in East-West Matches, Jimmy received the encomium from

In Memoriam

Bob Partridge (1926-2005)

By Marilyn Miller & Pat Partridge

One of Bob’s main enthusiasms was table tennis. He loved being a part of it on all levels. His wife, Pat, was usually by his side. They were also involved in sailing, belonging to several yacht clubs. But, his first love (after Pat) was table tennis, sailing, belonging to several yacht clubs. But, his first love (after Pat) was table tennis, sailing, belonging to several yacht clubs.

He played, umpired, was a Tournament Referee, Chief Umpire and an International Umpire in many tournaments over the years including many USA Nationals and Opens. He was in charge of table tennis at the Olympic Festivals for several years. Bob started the very successful Concord Table Tennis Club along with Phil Schafer in 1972.

One of his proudest moments was umpiring the bronze medal Men’s Singles match at the 1996 Summer Olympics held in Atlanta.

Bob and Pat traveled to England, Germany, Japan, Sweden and other countries as Bob did his job as an International Umpire for USATT. They made many friends. Fellow umpires admired him and players appreciated his fair officiating.

His most memorable tournament was the Worlds in Gothenburg, Sweden, where, in his words, he was “booed by 8,000 angry Swedes” when he faultered their hero, Jan-Ove Waldner, for inadvertently moving the table.

In 2000, Bob was inducted into the California Table Tennis Hall of Fame.

Note: Pam Ramsey set up a guest page: www.cvonline.biz/obituaries/guest_book/bob.partridge.html
Glancz that McClure has been our most colorful player for years, but this year he seems to have a steadier and better attacking game. Won Toledo U.S. Open.

1940: Won Doubles with Schiff at Indianapolis U.S. Open (run by Jimmy).

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

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

1947-53: Executive Secretary of USTTA.

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

1949-52: Captain/Player of two more U.S. World teams. Won Austrian Open Men’s Doubles. Directed two National Team Championships. Won Indianapolis City Singles and Doubles Tennis Championships.

1957: Married Nellie Lee Orr.


1966: Charter member of USTTA Hall of Fame.

1979: President of USTTA Hall of Fame.


1980-86: USTTA Vice-President.


1982-2000: Member of USOC Board of Directors

1984-85: USTTA Foundation Chairman.

1985-97: USTTA Equipment Chairman (as he had been in '49-51).

1986-87: Pan-Am Table Tennis Commissioner. Began two-year tenure as ITTF Vice-President for North America. Became, and continued to be until his death, the ITTF Hall of Fame and Merit Award Chairman. Pan-Am Table Tennis Commissioner.


1991-95: USTTA Vice President.

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

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

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

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

2001: USATT Mark Matthews Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient.
An Official’s View

In Memory of Great Men:
Bob Partridge and Jimmy McClure
By “Dr. Azmy”

In memory of our good men, let us follow their footsteps. Lately we have suffered great losses of some of our great umpires.

However, looking to their lives and achievements one can see great models that we should aspire for and follow.

As players they dedicated their lives to Table Tennis. To reach the levels of great players as local, national, and international champions, there must have been a part of their lives that was seriously absorbed by table tennis. Stories we heard from those who lived with them and those who have known them, tell us that they build shrines for table tennis where they have to visit every day, every week, through the years. Table tennis was a devotion that came first and above everything else.

When they became umpires, they excelled to the highest levels, from the club to the regional, to the national, and to the international. They were admired and respected by players, coaches, fellow umpires, and officials. They lived in the sport, accepted its ups and downs, survived its continuous changes, adhered to its rules and laws, and performed their duties in fairness and respect.

However, they were leader in opposing any rule or regulation that they felt was not in the spirit of the sport. History will tell us how they contributed to the lowering of the net by 3/4 of an inch, and how they stood firm in opposing age limits for umpires. One can go on, to write on and on, remembering each and all of them for their tasks.

As officials, one hears about their names as founders of clubs in their areas, as well as serving on several committees on the state, the national (USATT) and international (ITTF) levels. Their superb services were recognized; Bob Partridge by the California Hall of Fame. Jimmy McClure by the USATT and ITTF Halls of Fame and on the ITTF president advisory committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize our success as a reflection of the models set by our late great men. In their memory let us celebrate their achievements and ours as well. Yes, they were models for many of us and they helped develop a group of the finest and best umpires in the world. Let me touch on the latest example. Out of the worldwide 25 Blue Badge umpires, five are from the USA. This is probably one of the highest rates in the world. I know that many umpires are deeply concerned, if not just dissatisfied, with that new requirement. In fact some umpires entertaining the notion of quitting because of the Blue Badge rule.

The USTTA Foundation

By Neil Smyth, USATT Foundation Vice President

Members of the USTTA Foundation and the Table Tennis community have been deeply saddened by the passing of the Foundation’s founder and president, James H. McClure. The Foundation is a child of the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles, California. The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee was headed by the brilliant Peter Uberoff, who not only created a spectacular sporting spectacle, but cleared the way for the games by encouraging Angelenos to take their vacations, all while generating nearly $30 million in unheard of profit.

At the time, Mr. William Simon was the President of the USOC, having served as Secretary of the Treasury under President Nixon and coincidently a very close childhood friend and neighbor of this writer.

We were very fortunate that Mr. Simon appointed Jimmy McClure, along with four other members of the NGB (National Governing Body) Council, to decide how this money should be distributed to each NGB. I say fortunate that he hand picked our Jimmy out of over 20 NGB’s, particularly when you consider that Table Tennis was only a demonstration sport in 1984, not having attained full Olympic status until 1988 at Seoul, Korea.

Here, I quote from a letter Jimmy wrote to me: “In our meetings, I finally convinced the other 4 members to propose that the money should be shared equally by each NGB. Since the Olympics awarded the same size medals to each sport, regardless of the size, they should share the profits the same way. At that time, each NGB received their financial support from USOC according to their size. If the NGB Council voted to distribute the profits the same way, Table Tennis being one of the smallest sports, would have received less than one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000.00). Instead, we received over a million dollars ($1,336,000). To satisfy some of the committee members, I proposed an alternate plan, which was to share one half of the profits equally and divide the other half according to the size of the NGB. I was able to get them to agree to propose sharing the profits equally first, and if that failed, to propose the alternate plan.

They appointed me to make the proposal at the NGB Council meeting. Before the meeting, I contacted several of the larger sports such as Athletics, Baseball, Basketball, Swimming, Tennis, Boxing and Gymnastics. I convinced them that since they received lots of money from their sponsors, they did not need this additional money as bad as most of the smaller sports, many of whom were operating on a shoe string. This additional money would be a life saver for them.

At the NGB Council Meeting, I proposed that the profits from the Olympic Games be divided equally to each NGB and it received a second. Immediately, one NGB proposed that we should postpone the vote until the next meeting. I objected, that since we already had a motion on the floor, that we should go ahead and vote on it. If it was defeated, we could then decide whether to postpone any vote until our next meeting or entertain another motion. The chairman of the NGB Council called for the vote and my motion passes 17 to 5. At the USOC Board of Directors meeting, they voted to accept the proposal of the NGB Council to divide the money equally to each NGB."

Jimmy felt strongly that something had to be done to protect the money from frivolous spending as well as lawsuits against USATT. Accordingly, a Foundation was formed which would invest this money and in turn, could give a portion of its income to USATT.

The process was speeded by the fact that there was an earlier Foundation known as the National Junior Table Tennis Foundation, formed by Fred Danner in 1973, as a tax exempt organization for educational purposes at a time when federal law did not permit charities to be formed to support amateur athletics. When in 1976, the National Amateur Sports Act was passed, it became possible to qualify our charity to support amateur athletics, which Fred Danner and Gus Kennedy worked tirelessly to obtain. Twenty-three separate IRS approvals necessary to eventually create the USTTA Foundation. This work provided the structure through which the funding from the 1984 Olympics could be properly accepted.

After solving some of our initial financial problems for USATT, we asked for and were granted a permanent seat on the USATT Board. The rest is history, but it is clear that Jimmy McClure was not only a World Champion Table Tennis player, but moreover a World Champion fund-raiser and Guardian angel for our sport.

The Foundation Board Members who were elected to serve commencing May 3, 2005 are:

- Dell Sweeris President
- Neil Smyth Vice President
- Pam Ramsey Secretary
- Y.C. Lee Treasurer
- Shonie Aki Board Member
- Stanley Malless Board Member
- Carl Danner Board Member
- Terry Timmins Board Member
- Tom Miller Board Member

In addition, Dell Sweeris was elected to serve as our Representative on the USATT Board, with Y.C. Lee as the alternate. All of us are dedicated to maximizing our investment income and exploring the possibility of new sources of income for the benefit of Table Tennis in America.
USATT League of the Month:
The Milpitas Sports Center League
By Bruce Liu & Mark Johnson

The Milpitas Sports Center (MSC) is located in the city of Milpitas in northern California. USATT league competition started at MSC in October, 2003. Since then 47 USATT league events have been held involving a total of 990 matches. Among the 191 players in the mailing list at MSC, 112 of them – ranging from 2200 to sub-1000 – have taken part in league play.

The playing conditions are great with an ample parking lot, high ceiling, wood floor, top of the line tables, etc. The most appreciated feature is probably that all courts are individually separated. Although MSC has nine tables, only two to three tables can be used for the weekly league play since four tables are reserved for open play, one for doubles, one for coaching, and one for practice. It is a pity that MSC does not have storage space for more tables. Otherwise, more tables could be easily accommodated for league play. As it stands now, players have to make a reservation via email almost a full week in advance to assure their participation. Drop-in participation is nearly impossible.

Small prizes are given for the winner of each table. All league play results are entered in the USATT league page (www.usatt.org/league) as well as in MSC’s own website (www.milpitas-tabletennis.com).

Unlike other table tennis clubs, the Milpitas Sports Center is not actually a club. It is owned and operated by the city of Milpitas in northern California. There is no membership fee. Anyone paying the $2 drop-in fee can enjoy the best playing conditions for table tennis in the San Francisco bay area.

How did play start at Milpitas? In the summer of 2002, the city bought two nondescript tables with 1/2 inch tabletop and built-in plastic net sets and offered to start a table tennis program. Excited after seeing the offer in the city’s magazine, some local enthusiasts decided to check it out. Of course it was not all that they had hoped. They talked to the city and were told that there was no money in the budget for the foreseeable future to purchase new tables. It looked like a dead end.

But not so fast! Enter Gary Alcares, the 2001 U.S. Nationals Under 1600 Champion, who rode to the rescue. He personally bought four brand new Andro tables and two used Joola tables and rented them to MSC at an unbelievably low price. Later, due to storage space, he purchased three more brand new top-of-the-line Butterfly tables to replace the two big footprint Joola tables at no additional cost. The players in MSC also chipped in to buy two Butterfly tables. So as of this writing, there are five Butterfly Centerfold 25 Sky Rollaway and four Andro tables at MSC.

The Milpitas Sports Center is very friendly to newcomers. Newcomers are welcomed and given a brief orientation as soon as they are spotted. To best accommodate all levels of play, MSC offers the weekly USATT League, a clinic, many open play tables, a practice-only table, and the table dedicated for doubles. On occasion, MSC has even hosted interclub competitions between its members and other clubs in the bay area.

Here we are in May, welcoming us warmly – the best time for the 2005 World Championships in Shanghai with its population of 13.2 million and with many art galleries, museums and exhibition sites. Let’s wish our USA National Team success in their endeavors.

The Henderson Nevada Senior Games, March 5-6, went well as usual. Its coordinator, Jerry Ladd, thanks Paddle Palace for the donation of balls and a significantly reduced prize for five new tables. Jerry is grateful for Dan Cravens’ and Tony Gumataotao’s wonderful assistance during the tournament. The tournament results were:

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<th>Women’s Singles</th>
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<td>Silver</td>
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<td>Kathy Shrader</td>
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<td>Gold</td>
<td>Louisa Ladd</td>
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<td>Gold</td>
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<td>Joyce Arpon</td>
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<td>Men’s Singles</td>
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<td>Bronze</td>
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<td>Barry Meisel</td>
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<th>Women’s Doubles</th>
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<tr>
<td>Silver</td>
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<td>Louisa Ladd/Kathy Shrader</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>Joyce Arpon/Tamy Borg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Doubles</td>
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<td>Bronze</td>
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<td>Kathy Shrader/Dan Cravens</td>
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<td>Men’s Doubles</td>
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<td>Dan Cravens/Lynn Keler</td>
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<td>Jerry Ladd/Rick Haynes</td>
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<td>70-74</td>
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<td>Edmond Wong/John Haydo</td>
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Our fascinating saga about “Circle of Life” which started last year in Utah, during the Huntsman World Series Games, was happily concluded in Las Vegas with wedding bells, champagne and a solid marriage license for ex-marine Dan Cravens and Marina, his beautiful “blonde,” a table tennis coach from Russia.

“We enjoyed the presence of the ‘Russian addition,’ Marina, during the tournament,” said Jerry Ladd. He added, “in the near future at the Henderson Downtown Recreation Center, there will be a new opening three times a week for juniors and seniors and clinic/training sessions once a week, and Marina will coach there.” Table tennis and love, how invigorating it sounds!

Another sign of love and dedication to our wonderful sport can be found in the new 2005 North American tour. The Senior events – Over 40, 50, and 60 round robins – all are dedicated to the memory of Sol Feingold (Alga’s late husband) and are sponsored by David Sakai, Vladimir Feingold, and Olga & Stan Kahan.

The Feingold North American Memorial Seniors started on April 2, at the 2005 STIGA N.A. Tour in New Jersey. This will continue throughout the year.

May 28 Matthew J. Murad Memorial Open, MD
June 25 Stiga Open, N.A. Tour, Easton, PA
July 23 Eastern Open, Rutgers Univ., NJ
Aug. 20 San Diego, CA
Oct. 22 Lafayette Open, Easton, PA
Nov. 5 San Diego Open, CA

All those Seniors, coming to participate in these senior events, will compete for awards which will bear Sol Feingold’s name. Contact by e-mail: www.natalextennis.com.

The 2005 Pasadena Senior Olympics will be a qualifying site for the 2006 California Senior Championships in Sacramento in May, 2006. It includes Table Tennis – singles, doubles, and mixed doubles – in five-year groups for men and women, beginning at age 50 up to and including 100!!! Table tennis competitions will commence on Sunday, May 22, 9:00 AM, at Pasadena Senior Center, Pasadena. Contact Wei Wang and Diego Schaaf at 626-584-6377, or wei@alphatt.com and diego@alphatt.com.

June will be here soon and the North American Senior Tournament, known widely as the Meiklejohn Tournament, will be with us also. At the last tournament in 2004, the age range of players stretched from a youthful 40 to a middle-aged 93. There was also a noticeable addition of lovely and mature women at the tournament. To meet a widespread demand, this year the Meiklejohn will have a first-time event anywhere in the country, Women Over 70. Also included this year will be two rating doubles events, Under 3400 (singles max 2000 rating) and Under 3700 (no rating limit for individuals). Players can choose one or the other events, and the events could lead to some very interesting pairings. Imagine our 90-year-old lady with a rating of 600 paired with Cheng Yinghua. Awesome!!

If you have any questions, T.D. Ray Kunze can be contacted at zkunze@fca.net.

As we, seniors, all move along in our journey we have a new member joining us this year. As a youngster he used to play under the name of Jan-Ove Waldner. We assume as he begins life at 40 he will continue to contribute to the sport to which he has given so much.

**Dear Editor,**

USATT has made some changes recently regarding referees and the requirements needed to run tournaments. No more tournaments unless we comply! My first reaction like many others was disgust at more red tape for no good reason, causing us more grief. Aren’t we doing enough running clubs & tournaments? After contacting USATT & Wendell Dillon, we arranged a referee seminar to be conducted here in Charlotte after taking the online umpire test. Wendell gave an informative seminar & we tested afterward. I urge everyone interested in running tournaments to get the necessary information & make arrangements to be certified. Many questions were answered. Past issues were cleared up mostly by learning to follow the rules.

At our tournament the next day, we were not only able to run problem free & on time, but able to see how USATT procedures really do help avoid some of the problems encountered in the past. Even though it takes some effort, raising the level of officiating will result in consistent, standardized tournaments. Our club now has four umpires & a referee. We now feel confident we can offer a quality tournament & a professional experience for all our events.

**Sincerely,**

John Pahl, Charlotte TTC
College Report:

April Fool's Gold Rush
By Thomas Lackaff, NCTTA Public Relations Director

I write to you, dear reader, from the past, to address the events of the interim which lies between me typing these letters and you reading them. By the time your faithful postal carrier has delivered the magazine you now hold, the 2005 Clear Channel NCTTA National Table Tennis Championships will be in the record books. Were you there? Did you play? How did it go?

Championships will be in the record books. Were Clear Channel NCTTA National Table Tennis rapidly becoming a national institution?

As hungry team leaders like Univ. of Maryland’s Han Xiao (U.S. National Team Men's representative) and the mighty Florida State University, may tell you off the record, no one expects this to be a complete cakewalk for TWU. The unknown quantities among the international contingent have historically proven to provide an exciting element of volatility to the mix, as well.

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Who knows what the future holds? Well, by now, cherished reader, from my temporal vantage point here in this month known by its leonine debut and ovine curtain call, you do. I don’t know about you, but I can’t wait to see what happens next!

And now, a word from our sponsors: support from Clear Channel Communications, USATT, The Star Telegram, and equipment from Table Tennis Pioneers and Newgy helped make this all possible.

USATT Board Email Votes

Note – there were no email votes in January.

February, 2005

Motion One: Moved to nominate the USATT representatives to ITTF for the following positions:
- Michael Scott - member of ITTF Sport/Science Committee
- Tim Boggs - member of ITTF Media Committee
- Aly Salam - Chairman of ITTF Umpires and Referees Committee
- Azmy Ibrahim - member of ITTF Rules Committee
- Sheri Pittman - ITTF Board of Directors representative
- Tim Boggs - ITTF AGM representative
- Jiing Wang - ITTF AGM representative

Motion by Sheri Pittman; Second by Tong Lee
Motion passed: 9-0-1-2
Against: None; Abstain: Willy L; No vote: Ashu J, Lily Y.

March, 2005

Motion One: To submit to ITTF the bid for 2007 World Junior Table Tennis Championship to be held in San Francisco, December 9-16, 2007

Motion by Khoo Nguyen; Second by Whitney Ping
Motion passed: 11-0-0-1
In Favor: George B, Tim B, Robert B, Sheri P. Khoa N, Jiing W, Tong L, Whitney P
Against: None; Abstain: Willy L; No vote: Barney R.

Motion Two: Moved to nominate George Braithwaite as USATT delegate to US Olympic Assembly, and NGB council to be held in Phoenix, AZ, April 29-30, 2005. [Rationale: Sheri and Don will be at the World and would not be able to attend this meeting. USATT will pay for the delegate’s expenses.]

Motion by Sheri Pittman; Second by Ashu Jain
Motion passed: 12-0-0-1
Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: George B.

Motion Three: Moved to nominate Steve Isaacs on the Hall of Fame Committee.

Motion by Sheri Pittman; Second by Tim Boggs
Motion passed: 12-0-0-1
Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: Ashu J.

Motion Four: Moved to approve Ashu Jain, Whitney Ping and Khoa Nguyen as members of the Budget Committee.

Motion by Tong Lee; Second by Sheri Pittman
Motion passed: 13-0-0-0
Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: None

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Bas es Jern Ir:
The Backhand Drive

Preparation
Leg position can be parallel to the table, or with left leg slightly forward for right-handers to allow for easy transfer to forehand strokes. The racket is brought back to left hip area, with the wrist bent slightly backwards.

Swing – Contact
The racket moves forward to contact the ball in front of the body with the wrist straightening and forearm accelerating on contact to produce speed and power.

Follow Through
The racket moves forward and upward to a closed position in front of the upper body or head area.

Tip of the Month: May
Make Things Happen
By Carl Danner

You should approach every point with the idea of taking the initiative in some manner. It can’t always be a killer loop or spectacular counter, but strong players (at every level) are constantly probing their opponents, creating problems for opponents to cope with.

Roll a backhand. Add sidespin to a push. Serve an unexpected deep topspin. Drop a push short, and flip the next ball deep. Alternate topspin and dead counterdrives. Dig into one chop, and leave the spin off the next. There are so many variables you can employ – such as the depth, location, and spin of your shot – to make a given ball different, and more challenging for your opponent.

Most of all, keep your feet moving. Sometimes, it’s worth trying something different just to make sure your body is in motion! Your opportunities to attack will increase accordingly.

Tip of the Month: June
Finishing Off the Point
By Carl Danner

There’s no worse feeling than missing the open table when your opponent is way out of position. But it’s easy to err when you try to finish with a triumphant smash, or alternatively wimp out completely because you figure any soft shot will do.

Here’s a compromise two-part approach. Part one: When you see a big opening, hit about three-quarters of full pace. That’s enough to get the ball through, but not so soft as to let your stroke break down from swinging too slowly. Part two: Rather than assuming it’s an automatic winner, follow the shot with good footwork and preparation to handle a possible return. Most of the time the return won’t come, but the process of taking the point seriously until the very end will focus your concentration and help cut down on sloppy errors.
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SpinSpiel (regular) is very popular world-wide. With special sticky adhesive on the smooth inverted topsheet, SpinSpiel is famous for explosive spin, powerful drives, and stable control. Very tacky and spinny. Recommended for powerful players who need spin, spin, and more spin, with medium-fast speed. Sponge 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5. Item RJSS. SPEED 8.0 / SPIN 9.3 / CONTROL 7.3 / POWER 8.7 / Reg 528.95

SpinSpiel Hard Type: Same great tacky spin of the SpinSpiel topsheet, with the increased speed of the harder type sponge. Sponge 2.0, 2.5. Item RJSSH. SPEED 8.1 / SPIN 9.4 / CONTROL 7.2 / POWER 8.8 / Reg 528.95

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Comes with 6 dozen Nittaku 3 Star balls!
LILY YIP
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Note: this is a shortened version of the "This is Your Table Tennis Life" given by Tim (with slide-show photos) at Lily's Dec., 2004 Induction into the USATT Hall of Fame.

Shi-Ling "Lily" Yip (her maiden name) was born Aug. 22, 1963 in Canton (Guangzhou), China, the daughter of a policeman. Being a natural athlete, she was picked from hundreds of kids to possibly pursue, really pursue, her interest in table tennis, which she began to play at age 7. Turns out, however, she also liked to dance. By the time she was 8—it was the year of "Ping-Pong Diplomacy"—her table tennis coach said bluntly, "Choose! Table Tennis or Dance!"

By age 12 she was in a special table tennis school, where she "stayed in a dorm, spent half a day in classes, and half a day in training [as a pips-out penhold attacker]." At this age, she was allowed to come home over the weekends. After 3 1/2 years representing the City of Canton, she graduated and became "a professional player representing Guangdong Province." This advance wasn't easy, she says, "for I turned out to be the first and only one from my elementary school who ever became a professional [paid to play by the Government]."

Being a professional meant that she could choose her own racket. "I picked an 8-ply one," she said, "and in my eight years as a professional player I always played with it and it never broke." Although she liked to wear her hair long, it was as if she were in the military, for short hair was mandatory. (There's a photo of her at the Great Wall—a 16-year-old with a bowl haircut.)

In 1980, in an early round at the Chinese National Championships, Lily, with her thrusting jab blocks, deft pushes, and pips-out smack-attack, upset the 1979 Chinese National Champion Liu Yang, and also placed 3rd in Women's Doubles.

By 1982, she had a win over Geng Lijuan who'd go on to become World Women's and Mixed Doubles Champion and World Singles runner-up. Lily's other major successes included winning the Hong Kong-held Triangle Championship of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong, and Macao, and, like her male counterpart David Zhuang, becoming the Guangdong Province Champion. A member of China's National Youth (but not World) Team, she three times finished in the Top 16 at the Chinese National Championships.

"Of the 12 members of our National Youth Team, the top 10 would be World Champions"—"1," said Lily, "was #11." So by the time she was 20, Lily saw the handwriting on the Great Wall—a 16-year-old with a bowl haircut—"and decided that, though she'd continue to play table tennis, she'd take advantage of time she was 20, Lily saw the handwriting on the Great Wall and decided that the government's willingness to enable her to earn a Phys. Ed Degree. After studying English, she said she thought of coming to the U.S. or perhaps "of even going to Singapore, where my father, a victim of the Cultural Revolution, was from." Of course the Chinese in charge wanted her to stay and coach for them, but, despite the fact that she enjoyed coaching, she had "dreams of freedom and opportunity." So, though they weren't very nice about her leaving—they didn't sign all the documents she'd asked them to when she was applying for her visa—she managed in 1987 to come to the U.S., to retire from table tennis, and, having married, to give birth to two children, in 1988 and '89, and live a happy, nondescript life ever after."

Uh, not quite.

Having arrived at Cocoa Beach, near the Kennedy Space Center and the U.S. Open, where Lily made the U.S. World Team along with Insook Bhushan, Diana Gee, and the new 1991 U.S. Champion Wei Wang, Lily also made, as she would several times, the U.S. Pan-Am Team and, just before going to Cuba in July, 1991, she became a U.S. citizen. At Havana, Lily and her teammates overwhelmed the Cubans to take the Women's Team Championship. She also scored a win in Women's Doubles with Li Ai, whose mother, Li Henan, had coached Lily in China and at the 1987 World's in Chiba City, Japan. I was struck by the sweet camaraderie between teammates Lily and Li. In the 2-out-of-3 final, after losing the 1st game, they're up 22-21 in the 2nd—whereupon Li pushes off, then turns to Lily...and smiles! Whoever watching a player drop such a key point saw a reaction like that! But they won that game 24-22, and the 3rd for the Championship.

In the Women's Singles final, played on the 8th day of the tournament in that 95-degree, non-air-conditioned Havana Sports Centre cauldron, Lily, though she lost to Insook 3 straight, came very close to winning the gold, for she'd been able to hold an 11-3 lead in the 3rd, Insook would never have been able to finish the match. At the end, severely dehydrated, she was unquestionably near collapse and had to be administered to by Team Physician Dr. Michael Scott. Another game, perhaps another few points, and Insook would have fallen out there on court and been taken away in an ambulance.

At the '91 National's, Lily and Jimmy Butler were beaten in the final of the Mixed by Pan-Am Champs Sean O'Nell and Diana Gee. And in the
Singles. after being up 2-0 in the semi's against Defending Champ Wei, Lily lost 18 in the P.

Lily put it, "the biggest booths in History." But, ohh, all those tables she and Barry had to schlep all the way from New Jersey and back.

At the March North American Olympic Qualifier, after a very damaging loss to Peggy Rosen, she recovered from being match-point down, Olympic-point down, to upset Insook, and so led the qualifiers in the Singles. She also qualified in Doubles with Diana Gee. And all this while someone was heard to say, "How does Lily keep her hair so perfect throughout the matches?"

At the '92 North American Championships, Yip/Wang defeated Bhushan/Gee to qualify for their 2nd World Cup Doubles—which made them each $1,000 richer. That year, too, Lily was named USOC Female Athlete of the Year—an honor she'd also receive in 1995, '96, and '97. Because she was on the U.S. Olympic Team, Lily, along with the other U.S. Team members, Diana Gee and Sean O'Neil, was invited to the White House to meet President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush, as well as Arnold Schwarzenegger. Driven inside by a rainstorm, they all ate hamburgers and hot dogs sort of literally off the floor. Several staff members said that "in 20 years they had never seen anyone sitting on the floor in the White House."

In 1993, while at the Gothenburg World’s, Lily, her U.S. Women’s teammates, Wei and Virginia Sung, and Coach Zhang Li got to chat with 3-time World Champion Chuang Tse-tung and his Japanese wife Atsuko.

Lily would be in six National All-Star Women's finals, but would win only the 1993 one—from Feng. One observer said that Amy didn’t vary her serves enough and that gradually Lily got used to them all, so that no variation of any kind by Amy was able to throw Lily off.

That fall, we learn from Rhoda Samkoff’s interview that Lily is taking English and computer science courses at N.J.'s Middlesex College. "She prefers to wear dresses to her classes and 'real shoes' because she spends so much of her time dressed in sports clothes." Last year, Lily says, she decided to grow her hair. "I feel more like a woman when I wear it down, but when I play I wear it in a ponytail."

Ah, nice—that smooth photo I’m looking at was taken 10 years ago at the U.S. National’s: you might have thought that Lily and husband Barry Dattel had won the Mixed, but, alas, they were beaten in a close, 18-in-the-3rd match by the winners, David Zhuang and Amy Feng. In 1994 Lily again made the U.S. Team to the World’s—winning the last game of her match with Anita Zakarian 27-25, after being 20-15 match-point down. There at the ’95 Championships in Tianjin, she had wins over Hungary’s World #54, England’s #92 European finalist Lisa Lomas, and Slovakia’s World #103.

The Feb., 1996 Olympic Trials found Lily (now World #85) in great attacking form. In compiling a perfect 11-0 record, she had non-stop wins over her toughest competitors, Wei (World #101) and especially arch-rival Amy (World #47).

At the 1997 National’s, Lily loses to Defending and 6-time National Champ Gao Jun—says "Gao can push, I can’t." Huh? After all these years, Lily’s forgotten how to push? Having come first again in the U.S. Team Trials, Lily Captained the Women’s Team to the ‘97 Manchester World’s, where she beat both the English #1 and #2. In the following years, she would again qualify for U.S. World Teams. Indeed, a few months before she’s to turn 40, she’s not only at the 2003 World’s with the rest of the U.S. Team, but she has a win over Belarus’ World #68.

Beginning in 1998, Lily decides to have fun playing in the hardbat (as well as the sponge-rubber) events, and with her fast-block-and-hit game easily makes the transition. Of course crowds love to watch Lily’s matches, and for three straight years, with but one exception, she’s won every U.S. Open/U.S. Closed Hardbat Championship.

As the years go by, Lily becomes more and more ambitious. She becomes involved in various representative positions with the USATT, runs successfully for its Board of Directors, volunteers with husband Barry to support Mayor Bloomberg’s New York City bid for the 2012 Olympics, and continues giving exhibitions and soliciting sponsors to promote her tournaments.

Consider, for example, her involvement in the 2001 Hawaiian Senior Open, along with others, Shonie Aki, Azimy Ibrahim, and Y.C. Lee and his wife Nora. There Lily Yip Sports had, as Lily put it, “the biggest booth in History.” But, ohh, all those tables she and Barry had to schlep all the way from New Jersey and back.

A bio of Lily’s says she enjoys singing. But of course she enjoys more spending time with her two children, Adam and Judy, and coaching at her N. Club, at Youth School Programs, and at Boys and Girls Clubs. Years earlier she’d stated her career goal was to teach students to become U.S. Champions—and this in the years ahead was what she and her husband Barry so successfully committed themselves to do. And with her own children. Early on, Adam, not satisfied with being a player, wanted to be an umpire, and at 10 was the youngest qualified one in the Association ever had. But he shaped up—as a player soon delighted in showboating to galleries. Of course, Lily had said she wanted her kids to have fun—and over the years, as Adam and Judy have partnered their mother in Doubles events, it does look like, win or lose, they have had fun.

As we know, both kids have enjoyed a string of wonderful successes. Last year’s Closed, Adam, then 15, came first in the Under 18 Boys’ Team Trials and won the Under 22’s; Judy, not to be outdone, came first in the Under 15 Girls’ Team Trials, and at the 2004 U.S. Open took not only the Under 15’s but the Under 18 Girls title as well.

When interviewer Vivian Lee asked the young Champions, “Whom do you admire most?” the answer was: their Mom. “She motivates me, and she encourages me to win,” said Adam. “I admire her confidence,” said Judy, “I want to be like her.”

Hey, after a career like Lily’s, and on a night like this, who wouldn’t want to be like her? Ladies and Gentlemen—the Hall’s newest inductee, the very versatile and talented Lily Yip.
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*Recommended Capacity. Balls Recycle

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USATT Coaching Seminar

Colorado Springs, CO • Feb. 11-13, 2005 • By Larry Hodges • Info on USATT Coaching is at www.usatt.org/coaching

4 coaches from all over the U.S. participated in the USATT Coaching Seminar held at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO. Organizing and running the seminar were USATT Coaching Chair John Allen, USATT Technical Director Ben Grigore, and U.S.'s Men's Coach Dan Seemiller.

John opened the seminar on Friday night with introductions and a discussion of a wide range of topics of interest to coaches. Included were the coaching certification standards, the purpose of the seminar, and a range of other topics which John and Ben went over, mostly involving organizational or planning issues.

Dan and Ben next led the group in discussions of advanced technique, highlighted by videotape analysis of matches from the 2003 Worlds. Matches analyzed were Kreanga vs. Keen, Kong vs. Samsonov, Ma vs. Joo, and Schlager vs. Kong. Dan gave almost point-by-point analysis of many of the games, including what the player was thinking and trying to do.

Dan pointed out a number of new or relatively new techniques, many of which are now being copied worldwide. Some of these included new forehand serves where players hide which sidespin is being used right up until contact (best at this: Schlager and Wang Liqin, also Kreanga), and better and better over-the-table backhand topspins (best at this: Schlager, Wang Liqin, Kong, Oh, also penholder Wang Hao although we didn’t see tapes of him), and the near absence of blocking — nearly everything's a counterloop (best at this: Kreanga, Wang Liqin, Schlager).

On Saturday morning, Sports Psychologist Peter Haberl gave a talk on the mental side of sports, with a focus on table tennis. (He’d prepared by watching numerous tapes.) There’s just too much covered to go over here, but a few good quotes: “Tell athletes what to do, not what not to do,” “Fake it til you make it” (from Mohammed Ali), meaning if you aren’t confident, pretend and pretty soon you’ll convince yourself; and probably the seminar’s favorite, roughly: “Ratings are an illusion; they are un-avoidable, but you can find a way to put expectations aside and use the ratings to your advantage.”

One important technique he went over was how to get your concentration back when you’ve lost it — reader, has this happened to you? It’s the three Rs — Release, Relax and Refocus. (Release means to just blank your mind out; the other two are self-explanatory.)

The highlight of the sports psychology meeting was when Peter pulled out a puppet with boxing gloved arms, and proceeded to have it smack him in the face over and over while saying things like, “You can’t win. He’s too good. I’m going to look silly.” It was, of course, a demonstration of the negative inner talk that athletes often face and have to learn to avoid.

Sports Physiologist Karen Daigle then spoke to us about muscles and how they get energy. Table tennis is a unique sport in that it requires high levels of both aerobic and anaerobic work, and so we were given a primer on (brace yourself!) ATP/CP (immediate energy), glycolysis (short-term energy), and oxidation (long-term energy). She then gave a long talk and answered numerous questions about sports nutrition and hydration. She too had prepared by watching tapes of matches from elite tournaments. Probably her top two recommendations were to plan ahead and bring healthy things to eat and drink to tournaments, and to make sure to drink a few sips every six points whenever you play.

That afternoon and night we left the meeting room we’d been in and went to one of the Olympic gyms, where seven tables had been set up for us. Dan and Ben led us through lectures and demonstrations on topics such as advanced footwork, serves and receive. Dan ran us through a rapid-fire version of the clinics he’s been running since the mid-1970s. Ben and Dan had two long sessions on multiball training, one in the afternoon, one at night. Poor Dennis Davis, past USATT Coaching Chair. He’s no longer in the best of shape but still has nice strokes, and he became a very exhausted “demo dummy,” in part due to the very thin air at 6000 feet altitude.

On Sunday, Adrian Roberts of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) gave a presentation on the current drug testing status, and what elite athletes go through in drug testing. The rest of the morning Dan and Ben gave talks on footwork and balance, and various technical issues such as the importance of the free hand, forehand serving with sidespin both ways, loops with sidespin both ways, various return of serve methods, varying spin, and the short game.

Then the coaches were organized into six groups of about five each, and each group created some aspect of a training program for a “player profile” assigned by John to each group. The seminar then ended with an open question session.

Coaches and clubs are the backbone of advancing table tennis in this country, and while we have a long way to go, seminars such as these can be those first steps in that thousand-mile journey.

For info on USATT coaching, see the USATT coaching page at www.usatt.org/coaching. It includes various coaching news such as future seminars (there will be another at the U.S. Open and in the fall, not yet scheduled yet), links to coaching lists, and many other links of interest to coaches.

Coaches who participated included Boanerges Amon, FL; Ed Ball, CA; Abraham Blattstein, AZ; Houshang Bozorzhadeh, IA; Dennis Davis, CA; Sinisa Dragicolovic, CA; Walt Gomes, AZ; Alan Grumio, IN; Jerry Han, TX; Richard Hernandez, CA; Eddie Hodges, MO; Larry Hodges, MD; David Huggins, CO; Dana Jeffries CO; George Kent, KY; Roland Massoth, NM; Richard McAfee, CO; Clift Metzger, KS; Mike Mui, CO; Ray Pestrice, OK; Scott Preiss, CO; Jeff Savage, PA; Steve Slaback, OH; Duke Stogner, AL; Mike Sturtivant, CA; Yang Sung, WA; Stanley Taliferro, GA; Lewis Wei, CA; Len Winkler, AZ; Tom Wintrich, NM; Ben Wolski, PA; and Doon Wong, NY.
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How To Be a Champion

What does it take to be a Champion in Table Tennis? Ten articles by the best USA coaches and players answer that question, covering every aspect of the game.

As a special bonus, Jan-Ove Waldner of Sweden, considered by many to be the Greatest Champion of All, gives his Ten Tips for Future Champions.

If you're a serious player, if becoming a Champion is your goal, then this is your feature, the one to keep for years to come.

What it Takes to be a Champion

By Sean O’Neill. Five-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion, 2004 US Paralympics Coach/Team Leader, Stiga sponsored coach

Does it take determination, discipline, desire, or maybe God-given talent, superior genes, the perfect playing environment, and just a little luck? No single component by itself will make you a champion, but clearly the more key ingredients you possess, the brighter you will shine in table tennis and in life.

You have no control over who your parents are, so there is little benefit to spending time worrying about your genetics. For most American players, having an Olympic-level coach or full-time club in your backyard is unlikely, so there is not much point in being upset if you don’t have these. Good-luck charms or being Irish won’t suffice either, so what can you do?

The good news is that you do have control over many of the ingredients that help create a champion. A burning desire to succeed, the love of competition, an eagerness to improve, and an understanding that each match possesses golden nuggets of knowledge that you can learn from are all important pieces of the puzzle. Remember, becoming a champion isn’t a part-time job, but a full-time commitment to excellence.

The pursuit of excellence is the fuel that champions rely on to push themselves to higher levels of play. It is said that it takes a something extra to make a champion, and this is true. For those that would like to take the journey to the top of the mountain, here are ten winning trails to keep in mind. No one is born a champion. It requires many years of hard work and dedication. The journey begins with one small step and a belief that “I can and I will.”

1. Champions enjoy hard work

Serve practice, multi-ball, footwork drills, running, weightlifting and video analysis aren’t always the most fun activities, especially after a tough loss. However, approaching these tasks with vigor will provide a springboard that will let you leapfrog the competition. Champions use tournament results as feedback to adjust their workouts and goals. The day after a rough tournament, don’t be surprised to see a champion be the first to arrive at practice and the last to leave. During practice, each point should be treated with value, and nothing should be taken for granted.

2. Champions plan for success

Remember that failing to prepare is preparing to fail. But, what is your plan for success? Do you intend to cram on Friday night before a tournament or hope to “get hot” in the final in order to achieve success? Champions don’t hope for victory; they plan for it. Becoming a champion takes time and requires thoughtful planning. Create measurable goals with timelines that are realistic based on your performance and rate of improvement. Write down your daily, monthly, and yearly goals, and place them in your racket case to review before and after each time you play.

3. Champions are confident and optimistic

We play the ultimate individual sport: there is no one to hit a homer while you are on base or sink a free throw while you are on the bench; the ball is in your hands, and hopefully, on your racket during each rally. You must believe in yourself, if you expect to succeed. Champions know that with proper preparation they will play their best, and thus they can rightfully believe they can come out on top. When the score looks bleak, they know it only takes one point to start a great comeback. If someone just pulled off an upset, interact with them. Ask them how they did it. Their positive energy will be contagious. At practice, look to associate with players that have self-confidence and high expectations. Negative thinkers and pessimists are powerful energy zappers that should be avoided at all costs at tournaments.

4. Champions visualize success

If you can imagine it, you can achieve it! Champions understand the importance of mental imagery and visualization. This is a common skill most youngsters have until adults begin to tell them that they can’t do something. Prior to practice and competition, it is prudent to daydream about the perfect performance. Find a quiet place to relax and close your eyes. Imagine hitting that winning shot against Waldner or beating an opponent. The more vivid the imagery, the more powerful the impact. Your subconscious mind doesn’t know the difference between real and imagined events.

5. Champions are consistent

Champions know that success is the direct result of commitment and discipline. After a successful tournament, when it would be easy to take it easy, champions don’t break their stride, and often take it up a notch. During events, champions know how to run their own mental program during matches, and don’t wait until it is too late to make adjustments. Champions don’t get too excited when they perform their best nor get too nervous when they aren’t playing well. The key to being consistent is playing within oneself and not attempting risky moves that aren’t dependable at crunch time.

6. Champions are focused

Champions know that you can train hard and prepare well, but if you don’t have 100% concentration during competition, the chance for success will be haphazard. Before important matches, leave the building, take a break, clear your mind, and start to get focused for a point-by-point war. If you can win the battle of minds, you can play relaxed and at ease, but your attention must be on the task at hand. When your mind starts to wander, use a dependable technique like breathing control to re-focus your attention. Revisiting your written goals on a regular basis will make sure that you are always focused on your long-run success.

7. Champions are creative

Champions understand the need to think outside the box and to create their own unique style and strategy. Always following the lead of others, or becoming a carbon copy, is a recipe for mediocrity. Be original. Have
your own set of serves. Learn from the best players. But, modify their skill set to fit your needs. Don’t be afraid to add parts of other games into your own unique style.

8. Champions never quit
Far too many comebacks have been lost when players gave up a point too early. In our new eleven-point scoring system, amazing comebacks are at hand, if one is willing to believe the game is never over. Momentum is huge in table tennis, and failure to give an inch on the final point of a game will often lead to a shift in momentum for the remainder of the match. Regardless of the score, a champion knows anything can happen, in either direction.

9. Champions help others
Champions know that by helping others you are helping the game. Coaching and backhand drives, loops, blocks, pushes, flips, and perhaps even lobbing and chopping. It’s hard enough learning all these shots against all the different incoming balls (different spins, speeds, depth, direction, height, etc.). Now imagine having to do so while changing your stroke each time! Instead, develop a simple repeating stroke, and then all you have to do is essentially adjust the racket angle and perhaps the trajectory of the stroke.

**Develop the Basics: Strokes & Footwork**
By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach

At the 2004 USA Nationals, Cheng Yinghua, 46, became the oldest Men’s Singles Champion in history, and the four semifinalists averaged over 40 years old. This was unique in a sport that is usually dominated by younger, faster players.

When asked what the younger players needed to do to compete with these veterans, four-time U.S. Men’s champ and full-time coach Cheng said, “The younger players had not put enough training time and effort into the fundamentals. Fundamentals, fundamentals, fundamentals. Some find them boring, but they are probably the three most important things in being a Champion. No one becomes a champion in this sport without a solid foundation in the fundamentals. Many find it the “boring” part of training, since fundamentals are mostly developed through repetition, but they are absolutely necessary. Fundamentals, fundamentals, fundamentals. They don’t need to be boring. At the beginning level, where repetition isn’t easy, it should be a challenge just to do the repeating strokes. As players advance, they should work in more and more advanced drills, which leads both to more advanced play and more interesting practice.

What are the Fundamentals?
The fundamentals include both proper stroking and footwork technique. Tactics, mental and physical conditioning, even great serve and receive don’t help a lot if you don’t have the fundamentals down.

At its most basic level, table tennis involves moving into position, and then stroking the ball. Along the way, you have to choose which stroke to use, read the incoming ball and adjust the stroke and racket angle to it. But if you can’t move and stroke properly, nothing will help you.

The actual specifics of how to move and stroke are outside the scope of this article. For these, you really need a coach, although videos and books can also help. (Yes, it would take an entire book to cover the fundamentals.) You can find coaches at www.usatt.org/coaching. You can find books and videos from most major table tennis dealers.

The purpose of fundamentals is to develop consistency in your shots. To be consistent, you need to be in position for each shot, and use the same repeating strokes over and over. That’s what fundamentals are all about.

**Footwork Fundamentals**
To be a Champion, you have to develop proper footwork to that you are able to catch every ball in your forehand or backhand hitting zones.

Some players just stand at the table, and reach for the ball. If the ball just happens to be in the perhaps one-foot area that’s convenient for their strokes, they hit a good shot. If it’s outside that area, they have to adjust their shot—and so lose consistency. A good player will rarely hit a ball that you don’t have to move to.

**Stroking Fundamentals**
To be a Champion, you have to develop repeating strokes, strokes that you can do over and over and over and (my god!) over and over and over. At the advanced level, this means many strokes, including forehand and backhand drives, loops, blocks, pushes, flips, and perhaps even lobbing and chopping. It’s hard enough learning all these shots against all the different incoming balls (different spins, speeds, depth, direction, height, etc.). Now imagine having to do so while changing your stroke each time! Instead, develop a simple repeating stroke, and then all you have to do is essentially adjust the racket angle and perhaps the trajectory of the stroke.

**Beginning Fundamentals**
Many coaches swear by the “100” theory — you don’t work on much of anything else until you can do 100 forehand and 100 backhand drives with a proper stroke. To a beginner, this is a real challenge, and should be an exciting challenge. The same is true of each of the other strokes — they are a challenge at the beginning level, and striving to do a certain number in a row is a challenge. As the stroke is learned, the fundamental footwork should be learned with footwork drills, so moving to each ball and stroking it properly becomes... fundamental.

For each new drill involving a new stroke or some combination of stroking and footwork, beginners can see how many they can do in a row. It’s an exciting challenge, and sometimes they forget along the way that they are getting better and better!

**Intermediate & Advanced Fundamentals**
At the intermediate level, the player can do all the strokes consistently with proper repeating strokes. At this point, it’s time to get the fundamentals into game-like situations. This means doing drills that include more and more variation, and more and more random drills. Random drills are where the player doesn’t always know where the ball is going. If the fundamentals are mastered, a player can do this, at least at a slower pace. As the player advances, the speed of the drill can speed up. All players have a maximum speed at which they can still maintain the fundamentals; if you go beyond that speed, their fundamentals break down. By drilling, drilling, and more drilling, a player can increase the speed at which they can execute the fundamentals.

**Putting it Together**
Table tennis has been called chess at hyper speed. Imagine playing chess where you were missing a rook or queen. That’s what playing with poor fundamentals is. Proper fundamentals mean knowing you can execute the shots you call for in any given situation.

The Chinese tend to dominate table tennis worldwide. Most coaches would say that ultimately, the biggest advantage they have over their opponents is stronger fundamentals. It may be fun to play games, and they are important to improving, but the best players spend the majority of their training on... you guessed it, fundamentals. They may do it at a pace that doesn’t seem very fundamental, but that’s because of years and years of developing these fundamentals until they can do them at that pace. Why are they still working on them? So they can do them consistently at an even faster pace against anything an opponent can throw at them.

If you want to be a Champion, you’ll do the same.
The Improvement Pyramid
By Richard McAfee, USATT Certified National Coach, Butterfly sponsored coach

For any athlete looking to become a champion, it is indeed a long path towards glory. Studies of Olympic Athletes have shown that it takes about ten years of organized training to achieve elite status. Within the Sport of Table Tennis, there is a definite progression of skill development. To help my students understand where they are on this developmental path, I have created a tool called, “The Pyramid of Success.” The Pyramid shows the nine developmental stages that athletes go through in their journey to becoming a complete player. See if you can locate where you are on your own personal journey towards becoming a Champion.

The Stages of Athlete Development

Stage 1 - Basic Stroke Technique
At this stage, athletes are simply learning the fundamental techniques of the game such as basic strokes, elementary spin theory, simple serve and return, and the rules of the game.

Stage 2 - Basic Stroke Combinations
Once the athlete can control the basic strokes, the coach then begins to combine these strokes together to form combinations, bringing together both forehand and backhand techniques. This combining of strokes also requires that the athlete begin to move more, and lessons in footwork start during this stage.

Stage 3 - The 5-Point System
When the athlete can control the basic stroke combinations, the focus is turned to learning how to play points. As most points in a game are finished by the fifth stroke, the emphasis is placed on the first five possible strokes of a game. As all points must begin with either a serve or a return, these techniques are stressed during this stage. Third and fifth ball attacks are introduced, as well as fourth ball counter attacks or defense. The goal of this stage is to move the athlete from thinking of executing one stroke at a time, into planning out whole points.

Stage 4 - Style Awareness
During stage three, the athlete’s natural style begins to express itself. It can be seen in how the athlete chooses to begin putting their points together. Does the athlete naturally prefer to hit rather than loop? Does the athlete have natural early or late timing? Does the athlete prefer to play close to the table or at mid-distance? These and other telltale signs start to show as the athlete learns to play whole points. During this stage, athletes should be introduced to the basic styles of the game, through written materials and the use of videotapes. They should watch the better players at the club and place these players into style categories. Finally, the athlete should write a complete description of his or her own style. An athlete’s style is normally a blend of two of the major styles.

Stage 5 - Advanced Stroke Techniques
Now that the athlete understands what their style will be, they must begin to learn the advanced techniques necessary to complete that style. What these techniques are will vary greatly from style to style. Pips-out hitters, all-round top-spin attackers, and choppers all need to learn very different techniques.

Stage 6 - Advanced Stroke Combinations
Once these advanced techniques are learned, they must be combined with the athlete’s existing strokes and blended into the desired style of play. During this stage, the Five-Point System is revisited and practiced using the new combination of advanced strokes.

Stage 7 - Self-Awareness
At this stage, the athlete has all the technical tools necessary to execute their desired style of play. The focus at this level of development is on gaining match experience and learning how to use their style to defeat opponents at the International Level. As the athlete is still somewhat inexperienced, they are still focused more on what they are attempting to do than on what their opponent is doing. The athlete has become self-aware but often cannot focus outward towards their opponent.

Stage 8 - Refining Style
As the athlete begins to gather more and more match experience, they will continually be making small corrections and additions to their style of play. Ideally, athletes will return to this stage over and over again throughout their competitive life. When an athlete stops learning and improving their game, their development is over.

Stage 9 - Full Awareness
This is the stage of development that all athletes strive for. It is often called “the peak experience.” During this stage, the athlete is almost totally focused outside himself. Fully aware athletes often report feelings of time moving slower, the ball appearing larger, and feeling that they can do anything they want to with the ball. While most athletes experience this “peak experience” at some point in their lives, the fully aware athlete can reproduce this experience much more often.

Important Points
Please remember that an athlete’s development does not follow rigid, set stages. Rather, it flows as a process with each athlete spending more or less time in any one stage, as needed. Movement is not always in an upward direction. Sometimes, an athlete will need to return to a lower stage to correct some problem or learn material that was missed.

Most coaches feel that it takes about ten years of training to take an athlete to the top of their game. Hopefully, the Table Tennis Pyramid of Success will give athletes, coaches, and parents, a guide to understanding the athlete’s journey towards reaching their goals. While many try to become champions, only a few actually make it all the way to Stage 9. In fact, some athletes will stall out at each level. These athletes will make up the majority of players who participate in our sport. For that reason, it is important for everyone involved to understand that, “The quality of the journey is more important than the destination.”

The Pyramid of Success not only represents the path of the athlete but also the overall development of our sport. There will always be a smaller number of athletes at each increasing Pyramid Stage. The greater the numbers of athletes entering Stage 1 of the Pyramid, the greater the number of elite athletes produced, and the higher their level will be.
Develop a Winning Playing Style

By Carl Danner, USATT's "Tip Of The Week" Online Coach

You’ve taken your table tennis seriously for a while, and started to develop some reasonable strokes. But in matches, you struggle to win points by any means possible, and never achieve the flowing game the better players seem to have. What you need is a winning playing style—both to raise your playing level, and to make your matches more enjoyable.

Indeed, there is an interesting contradiction evident in top world-class play. On the one hand, such players can presumably execute any stroke, probably quite well. Their choice of shots would appear limitless. On the other hand, world-class players use distinct styles that depend on the repeated execution of a few key strokes they seem to have mastered. How they decide what those shots are, and how they compel their opponents to allow them to take those shots, are the key elements that they (and you) need to address in developing a style that will deliver more wins, and fun.

Let’s go through the process of developing a playing style. These basics are useful both for relative newcomers trying to get started in the sport, as well as for intermediate or advanced players who aspire to further improvement. Even experienced tournament players sometimes have trouble pulling it all together, and might benefit from a refresher.

1. What is a playing style, and how does it work?

Generally, a style has two parts. First, a style is built around a particular, reliable way to win points. It might be, for example, a strong forehand loop. It might be consistent underspin (or “chopping”) defense to force opponents into errors. Perhaps you want to throw repeated topspins at your opponents until they miss. Because modern table tennis rackets let players hit a wide variety of shots, there are numerous ways in which points can be won—a subject we address further below. But for an effective style, you need to pick one shot (or shot sequence) as your goal for how most points should end.

Second, a style uses all the shots you hit in a point to encourage your opponent to feed into your point-winning play. Conversely, a style also eliminates from your game other shots that encourage returns from your opponent that don’t feed into your winning approach. For example, if you prefer to attack your opponent’s topspin shots, then you will want to use serves that encourage such returns—and perhaps even give up the use of other serves that don’t, even if those serves sometimes win points outright. Likewise, a loop that wants underspin pushes to attack is better off serving low and short, rather than using deeper serves that will let your opponent topspin first.

2. Choosing a style to develop

For some players a style seems to develop on its own, while others may have to make a conscious choice of which one to use. Either way, at some stage it will benefit you as a player to decide what your style is, or should be.

As a starting point, consider a winning stroke that’s already comfortable for you. Perhaps you have a strong loop, or fast feet are a necessity for a big forehand loop, any kind of defense, and consistent topspinning. You should enjoy your preferred style, just for the fun of it and to help motivate the practice needed to pull the pieces together. So again, feel free to pick one you like.

3. Turning style into strength

Having chosen a style, it’s time to build it into a winning approach. To do so requires you to develop and perfect your weapon(s) of choice, while constructing the rest of your game to create opportunities to use that weapon. Let’s start with your winning play before turning to the other shots and rallying techniques that will let you use that play as often as possible.

Winning Playing Styles
Left: World Men’s Champion Werner Schlager of Austria: two-winged looper
Right: Olympic Men’s Singles Gold Medalist Ryu Seung Min of Korea: one-winged looper
When I first started playing this sport, at age 12, at the South Park Club in Pittsburgh, I knew very little about the tactical side of table tennis. I just played by feel, reaction and instinct. About age 17, still with no formal training, it really bothered me that there seemed to be no rhyme or reason why I played well or poorly. “Why did I win that last point?” “Why did I lose that last match?” I wanted to know. That summer I attended a Dell Sweers camp and learned the techniques about this sport, including tactics that work and why.

I would estimate that 75-80% of tournament players do not think very much when they play – they just compete. If you incorporate tactical thinking into your play you will have a distinct advantage over these competitors and you will win more often. That’s a good thing. One warning – too much thinking can also be harmful, slowing you down and not allowing you to play naturally. I try to go by this credo: 50% conscious thought, 50% instinctive play. In other words, my strategy is to plan or anticipate certain combinations while at other times (50%) I want to stay neutral and be prepared for anything.

OK, let’s get started. The number one tactic is to attack your opponent’s middle; this is the switch point between forehand and backhand. This is sometimes called the pocket; if you were playing a right hander it would be their right pocket. A good loop or block to the middle can lead to indecision (as in FOREHAND or BACKHAND). They will have to move and hit and the body inhibits the proper swing. So, if you can place the ball to your opponent’s middle quickly they will have three different areas to deal with. Fast serves, quick block/pushes and loops are all weapons that can be used to exploit the middle. One note of caution: the middle is a moving target, not a stationary one. It requires skill and experience to consistently find it. When I compete, attacking the middle is my main focus.

The second tactic would be to play wide to the forehand or backhand – when the angle is there attempt to place the ball so as to break the sidelines of the table. This will force your opponent to move more and will open up the other side. For example: play a shot wide to your opponent’s FOREHAND and then the next ball wide again, but to the backhand. In general these first two tactics are all about ball placement and trying to stay out of the main FOREHAND and BACKHAND lanes.

Changing spin and speed is essential to winning table tennis. So many players spin the ball hard, hit it fast, have all the strokes yet never reach their potential. Why? You must keep your opponent off balance – changing spin and speed as well as placement is necessary to be effective in this sport. Iljia Lupulescu and Cheng Yinghua are masters at changing the amount of spin and speed on their loop drives. One block goes in the net, the next off the end. How can you learn this technique? Consciously think about it. Change the arc on your loops, mix up the speed when you attack. Use less friction and hit fake (FOREHAND) loops that your opponent will block in the net. Practice these skills; you will find them invaluable. Yes, faster is generally better but if it’s always the same your opponent can easily adjust and use the speed against you. Push with heavy spin then light spin. Changing spins and speeds combined with good placement can improve anyone’s level. The bottom line is you must use your brain during play; science thoughts, not just instinct.

Table tennis is like physical chess, or cat and mouse interplay. You must be thinking and be aware of what your opponent is also planning. In the beginning this will be difficult. But, you must start somewhere and you will improve this process as you gain experience. I tell my students to think because it will help them focus, make better choices and there’s the added benefit when your mind is active in the “now phase” that they will be less likely to become nervous. Think about it this way – if your opponent is expecting you to attack it might be a good time to defend and vice versa.

Combination tactics: Play one ball to the middle then the next one wide or vice versa. Impart heavy spin on one ball then light spin on the next. Play short to one side and deep to the other corner.

What about playing specific styles? What to do against a power loop? Serve short and attack first. On return of serve limit the amount of pushing you do. Attack the serve or drop it short. If your opponent has a strong FOREHAND loop your strategy will be to minimize how many times he can use it, trying to take away or limit your opponent from using their best weapon is a successful tactic and always part of my game plan.

Playing a penholder: What to do? Remember these tactics are in general terms. High spinny loops to their backhand are difficult to block for the penhold player. Do not attack or counter with speed to the backhand – penhold players use this energy to block you out of position. Generally, play safe and topspin to their backhand side and when possible attack the forehand side with force. Playing the ball wide to the FOREHAND then deep to the BACKHAND or vice versa works well. Do not push slowly to the BACKHAND corner. The penhold player is excellent attacking with the BACKHAND corner.

What about the defensive or blocking style player? Be patient. Remember, they are playing this way because their offense is usually weak or inconsistent. Choose your attack carefully. Change the pace of your attacks; vary the spin and speed on your loops. When pushing or drop shotting, play to their short forehand, do not make consecutive attacks unless you are sure of the spin and your position. Exploit the fact that they probably can’t hit through you. Against the defensive player, attack the middle whenever possible and of course move them in and out.

The blocking player is generally susceptible on the wide FOREHAND or wide BACKHAND – not as vulnerable in the middle as attacking players are.

Other intangibles would be to scout your opponent. Particularly watch their serves; plan out your response to each of their serves. Are they stronger on the FOREHAND or BACKHAND? A strong BACKHAND position would be with the right foot forward; a closed stance. How do they return serve? When possible do your homework and try to find out what you can on an opponent. When this is not possible remember to play your game. Be ready to adjust if necessary. Having good tactics means you have to keep probing your opponent, looking for weaknesses. In an ideal situation (the one you’re working towards) you would like to have your strengths attack the opponent’s weaknesses. It seems simple but too often in the heat of the match we can forget unless we train (remind) ourselves to focus on this.

If you want to improve the tactical side of your game you must know your strengths, be focused, do your homework and be aware of your opponent’s strengths. Have fun while you’re doing this ... this is the mental challenge of table tennis. Our sport is like physical chess. You must be ready to move and choose the appropriate shot in the fraction of a second. Of course, experience is the greatest teacher. This sport is definitely a cat and mouse situation where if you are weak mentally you end up the mouse. Lastly have fun when you play ... you will think more clearly.

**Tactical Thinking Guidelines**

- Keep probing opponent to find weakness.
- Serve short and attack the third ball.
- Loop the serve if it is long.
- Playing the ball wide to the FOREHAND (when possible) opens up the BACKHAND.
- Serve short and use drop shots when returning short serves.
- Use the entire table when serving.
- Have more than one option on each serve return.
- Attack & defend the middle as the number one focus.
- Change spins/speed especially when on the offense. Variation of these will improve deception.
- Have a game plan then follow and adjust when necessary. This will improve your concentration.
How to Rove Up a Level

By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach
Reprinted from May/June 1999 USATT Magazine

What does it mean to move up a level in table tennis? I'd define two players to be on different levels if it would be a major upset if one defeated the other. Another way of looking at it would be to say that if the stronger player plays his normal level, he would win nearly every time.

Based on this, I'd say that a level in table tennis (using the USATT rating system) ranges from about 300 points at the lower levels (under 1000) to about 100 points at the higher levels (over 2500). For most USATT players, a level would be about 200 points.

How can you move up a level? By improving all parts of your game, because one weak link in your game is like a weak link in a chain.

You could work hard, dramatically improve one aspect of your game, and hope to move up a level. But it's not that simple. Suppose you develop a really nice forehand loop. With this weapon, you would think that your level would go up dramatically. And sure enough, you will do better against players around your own level.

But when you play players a level higher, their level is far enough ahead of yours that they'll simply do something to disarm your new weapon. They may serve or push short, push very heavy, throw spiny or fast serves at you, use ball placement, block well, force backhand exchanges, play quick shots, or simply attack first to take your weapon (in this case your forehand loop) away.

Often, stronger players will seem to win on one of their strengths, but in fact they are winning by exploiting a weakness of yours that allows them to use their strength. A strength in your game can compensate for a weakness, but only to a certain extent. A stronger player will simply set up his strengths by going to your weaknesses.

The lesson is that to move up a level, you need to improve your game overall, not just one aspect. A player who is a level stronger than you rarely defeats you with one aspect of his game; he does so by using the overall level of his game.

There are, of course, players who have improved all but one aspect of their game, and, by improving that one final aspect, suddenly go up the coveted level!

So how do you go about moving your game up a level? You have to be able to match higher-level players on five key things:

Five Key Things You Must Do Against Higher-Level Opponents to Reach Their Level

1. Return their serves as well as they return yours.
2. Either rally as fast as they do, or force them to rally at your pace (by slowing the pace down with pushes, slow loops, controlled drives, etc.). Rallying at their pace can also mean reacting to their pace (i.e. blocking or chopping), because "pace" means both speed and quickness.
3. React to their rallying spins (loops, pushes, chops, lobs, spins returned by long pips, etc.) as well as they react to yours.
4. End the point (i.e. smashing or loop killing) as well as they do. This can also mean stopping them from ending the point effectively or consistently by not giving them easy shots, or it can mean a series of strong shots that win the point.
5. And finally, possess at least one strength that threatens them as much as their strengths threaten you. This includes having a way to get your strength(s) into play.

You may have noted that tactics is not one of the five "keys." This is because tactics is part of all five keys. Stronger/weaker tactics simply make you stronger/weaker in each key.

If you can do some (but not all) of the above five keys, your performance in a tournament will go up some, perhaps half a level, but not a full level. Developing a single "overpowering" strength won't raise your level as much as you'd think, as opponents a level higher will beat you on the less developed parts of your game. Even players at your "previous" level will still often beat you by exploiting these weaknesses. But ... if you work to improve all five of these keys, you may find yourself going up dramatically.

What's stronger, a chain with four powerful links and one weak one, or a chain with five pretty strong ones?

Sports Psychology for Table Tennis

By Richard McAfee,
USATT Certified National Coach, Butterfly sponsored coach

So you want to become a Table Tennis Champion? Besides the necessary technical and physical training, successful athletes must also learn to master their own emotions and thoughts. Many talented players have found this to be their major hurdle in achieving elite status.

News stories are full of top athletes working with Sports Psychologists to achieve breakthroughs in their performances. Coaches now routinely include psychological elements in their training sessions, even for beginning players. So just what is Sports Psychology all about?

Sports Psychology Includes:

1. Developing short and long-term goals for your journey through sport.
   Your coach cannot help you reach your goals until those goals are clearly understood.
2. Changing your negative thought patterns and perceptions into positive ones (re-scripting).
   Everyone has thought patterns that continuously run through our minds. Often these patterns/scripts are formed when we are young and not based in reality. When they interfere with performance, the athlete must learn how to change the thought pattern (re-scripting). He/she must recognize when these thought patterns are occurring and practice stopping the pattern and inserting a rehearsed position pattern in its place.
3. Using positive and eliminating negative self-statements about your abilities and athletic performance.
   Self-statements are self-fulfilling. "YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE!"
4. Learning to use progressive relaxation techniques to help your performance.
   There is a strong mental and physical connection. Learning to relax physically leads to top mental performance.
5. Learning to use visualization techniques to enhance both learning new skills and competition performance.
   The stronger your mental image of a skill becomes, the easier it becomes to learn or correct a physical skill.
6. Learning how to better concentrate and focus during practice and competitions.
   This is the ultimate goal of Sport Psychology. You will play like you practice.
7. Learning how to mentally cope with adverse situations as well as injury and pain.
   These situations occur in the life of every athlete. The ability to mentally stay strong through adversity often is the difference between the good player and the real Champion.

If these skills sound a lot like the same skills you need to achieve in life and the work place, they are. That is what makes this area of training so important to all athletes. It is this area the most translates over to our everyday life. Sports Psychology will not only help you achieve your goals within the sport world, it will help you achieve a better life.

U.S. #1 Under 12 player A.J. Brewer concentrating.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2005 53
iller Practice Sessions
By Larry Hodges, USATT Certified National Coach
and Sean O’Neill, Five-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion & USATT Certified National Coach

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o you’ve decided you want to beat the neighborhood or club champ, and move up to the next level. Then you’re going to have to practice. You know – go out to the table with another person who’s also tired of losing, and do practice drills (not just games) to improve your game. There are a number of factors you should consider to maximize your time. First off, everybody should not be doing the same drills. What drills you should do depend on:

• The playing level of you and your practice partner
• The playing style & equipment of you and your practice partner
• The frequency & duration of your practice sessions

The Playing Level of You and Your Practice Partner

Obviously, if you’re just starting out, you won’t be working too much on your inside-out loop off the bounce. On the other hand, you won’t see the world champion hitting forehand to forehand much except as part of a short warm-up. So choose drills that are appropriate to your level. Focus on consistency and proper form. Move your feet to every shot and return to ready position. Get the fundamentals down so you will be “good enough” to do advanced drills with shots you can actually do in a match consistently. Without the fundamentals, your game will always be fundamentally flawed, and it will be difficult to improve.

Playing Styles & Equipment of You and Your Practice Partner

The playing style of you and your partner also affects what drills you will be doing. If your partner has long pips on his backhand, don’t expect to practice forehand to backhand type drills. If one player is primarily a looper, the other a hitter, then each will be doing different style drills. So you have to make allowances for all of this. Take advantage of your partner’s style to practice drills against that particular style. To become a well rounded player try to practice against a wide variety of styles, especially prior to tournaments.

The Frequency and Duration of Your Practice Sessions

If you only practice occasionally, you should pick your drills with great care. There are two “theories” as to how to choose drills for an occasional practice session. You can either choose specific parts of your game that need work, and focus on that; or you can do a general session, working on your most common shots. Here’s our recommendation: choose a couple of things that you really need work on, choose a couple of things that you do really well, and want to tune up; and work these items into a general practice session that covers as many of the techniques that you use in a match as possible.

Of course, if you practice regularly, you’ll get the best of both worlds!

Choosing the Drills for Your Practice Session

There are many possible models for a practice session. What we are going to do is design a general session that you can use as a model for yourself. Each part of the practice session developed below is divided into beginning, intermediate and advanced drills. The level designation does not refer strictly to your overall level of play, however. Take into account how well you do the technique being practiced. For example, a player with a good loop may do more advanced loop drills than a weaker player whose loop is not as good. Using the USATT’s rating system, a very rough idea of these levels might be up to 1300 for beginner level, from 1300-1800 for intermediate, and 1800+ for advanced.

A typical practice session might be broken down into the following eight parts. Missing any part is like missing a link in a chain.

1. Warm up/stroking drills
2. Footwork drills
3. Attack drills
4. Break

Warm Up/Stroking Drills

This is where you warm up the muscles and tune up the basic shots. Beginners need to do more basic stroking drills, such as forehand to forehand and backhand to backhand, to develop the strokes and the timing. As players get more advanced, more advanced techniques should be incorporated into the warm-up, such as looping or footwork practice (which overlaps the next part of the practice session).

Beginners

• Forehand-to-forehand, crosscourt, or forchand to backhand, down the line, 7.5 minutes
• Backhand-to-backhand, crosscourt, or forehand to backhand, down the line, 7.5 minutes
• Forehand-to-backhand pushing, 5 minutes
• Forehand-to-forehand pushing, 5 minutes

Optional drill

• See how many forehands and backhands you can hit in a row. Try for 100.

Intermediate

• Forehand-to-forehand, crosscourt, 2.5 minutes
• Backhand-to-backhand, crosscourt, 2.5 minutes
• Forehand-to-backhand, down the line, 2.5 minutes
• Backhand-to-forehand, down the line, 2.5 minutes
• Forehand loop against block, 5 minutes each

Optional drills

• Pushing all over table, all types of pushes
• Backhand loop against block
• Counterlooping

Advanced

• Forehand-to-forehand crosscourt or forehand to backhand down the line, 2.5 minutes
• Backhand-to-backhand, crosscourt or backhand-to-forehand, down the line, 2.5 minutes
• Forehand loop against block, partner moves you around, 5 minutes each
• Backhand loop against block
• Counterlooping
• Pushing all over table, all types of pushes

Footwork Drills

Beginners

• Alternate forehand and backhand shots. You hit all shots to one place on partner’s side, either the forehand or backhand side. Partner alternates hitting to your forehand and backhand corners. 5 minutes each
• Side-to-side footwork forehand, all forehands against partner’s backhand block to your forehand and backhand courts, 5 minutes each

Optional drill

• Figure 8 FH footwork – server goes crosscourt, receiver goes down the line with both players only using forehands. 10 minutes total

Intermediate

• Side-to-side footwork drill, 2/3 table covered, 7.5 minutes each
• Partner randomly hits ball either to your forehand or backhand side; you stroke each ball back to the same spot. 5 minutes each

Optional drills

• See Falkenberg drill under “advanced.”
• Figure 8 FH footwork – server goes crosscourt, receiver goes down the line with both players only using forehands.

Advanced

• Side-to-side footwork drill, fast, 2/3 to full table covered, 5 minutes each
• 2-1 drill (also called Falkenberg drill): You hit all balls to your partner’s backhand. He hits two to your backhand, one to your forehand, then repeats. You return first shot with your backhand, step around and hit next with your forehand, then return the next shot (to your wide forehand) with your forehand. 5 minutes each
• Random footwork. Partner hits balls to all parts of the table randomly; you stroke each ball back to the same spot. 5 minutes each

Optional drill

• Serve backspin; partner pushes to your wide backhand; you step around and loop with your forehand to your partner’s forehand; he quick-blocks crosscourt to your wide forehand; play out the point.

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• Backhand-to-backhand, crosscourt, or forehand to backhand, down the line, 7.5 minutes
• Forehand-to-backhand pushing, 5 minutes
• Forehand-to-forehand pushing, 5 minutes

Optional drill

• See how many forehands and backhands you can hit in a row. Try for 100.

Intermediate

• Forehand-to-forehand, crosscourt, 2.5 minutes
• Backhand-to-backhand, crosscourt, 2.5 minutes
• Forehand-to-backhand, down the line, 2.5 minutes
• Backhand-to-forehand, down the line, 2.5 minutes
• Forehand loop against block, 5 minutes each

Optional drills

• Pushing all over table, all types of pushes
• Backhand loop against block
• Counterlooping

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• Forehand-to-forehand crosscourt or forehand to backhand down the line, 2.5 minutes
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• Serve backspin; partner pushes to your wide backhand; you step around and loop with your forehand to your partner’s forehand; he quick-blocks crosscourt to your wide forehand; play out the point.
Strength and Conditioning for Table Tennis

By Christian Lilliebroos, Head Table Tennis Coach, Texas Wesleyan University; Member of NSCA (National Strength and Conditioning Association)

Most people in the USA are surprised by the fact that table tennis is a very physically demanding sport. When general physical fitness tests for all sports are done in developed Table Tennis countries, Table Tennis is frequently considered to have the best overall fit athletes. To create a strength and conditioning program for table tennis, we have to look at what all levels of athletes need in terms of physical requirements.

Typically a player has 0.5 seconds to react to a ball hit at 60 MPH from a distance of nine feet. The ball can also have up to 9000 RPM of spin, and the table is five feet wide. In a race of 100 meter it is speed. Table tennis is much faster than that, dealing with quickness and explosiveness similar to combat. To react fast and remain in balance, you need to be low, lean forward, with your knees bent to about 90 degrees depending on your height. Quick lateral movements are used almost exclusively with one step back and forth for balls close to the net. A defending player is doing much more work inwards and outwards compared to an offensive player and the rallies are longer. A close match in seven games takes about 45 minutes. Due to the physical efforts required, ITTF rules state that in a tournament no player should be required to play more than four matches in a day. USA tournaments play more matches than anywhere else in the world, sometimes up to 15 matches in a day. The athlete’s level of play makes a huge difference in terms of physical output. Normally players below 1500 love to play all day long, because they do not expend much energy. At 1500-2000 players use more energy but not even close to the higher-
level players. At 2000-2250 it becomes more physical, and over 2250 physical preparation is essential. It is important for the tournament organizers to understand this as well. In USA high-level players are frequently treated the same in terms of number of scheduled matches in a day as intermediate-level players. An over-2400 player should not have more than four tough seven-games matches in a day. A player below 2000 can easily play 10 matches in a day.

So how to properly prepare for these physical challenges? For fastest improvement each athlete has to carefully evaluate what his/her training time should be used for?

**Below 1500**: Technical work at the table is the best use of time. That level has not yet acquired good footwork, the skills to consistently hit the ball hard, how to read spin, and therefore will not expend much energy.

You cannot return a serve why waste time on physical training?

**1500-2000**: Physical fitness starts to be important. Your fitness might limit you to what you can do technically. Start with aerobic conditioning. You should do aerobic workouts from 20 min - 40 min 1-2 times week, like swimming, cycling, walking, or running. Running is preferred but also the most demanding. The body is not designed to run slow. You need to run at least at a 10-minute mile (6 MPH) pace, to do somewhat a full stride. At a slower pace the body will be susceptible to injuries from incorrect running techniques. If you cannot run at that pace, walking is a good alternative. Lighter calisthenics like jumps, push-ups, and crunches are also good. Each set needs to be at least 15 repetitions; otherwise it is too easy or heavy. When you use your own body weight as a measure of resistance it is often conflicted with the notion that it is easier than using weights. For example push-ups can be compared to bench press. At 200 pounds, a push-up is the equivalence of doing a 160 lbs, bench press lift. If you are overweight, using your body weight will almost always be too heavy. Using a weighted bar can make it easier. For a younger and smaller but fit athlete it might be easy to use his/her own body weight.

**2000-2250**: Weight training starts to be more important. One of the most important effects of proper weight training, besides the obvious is strength, is increased flexibility, increased explosiveness, and increased speed. The old notion that weight training makes you slow is today clearly demonstrated erroneous by the large sprinters and football player who are faster than ever. Weight training once/week, where you work your whole body, will help your game. This is assuming you play table tennis three times week. The most important muscle group are the leg muscles. Find a personal trainer who can show you how to correctly do a back squat, meaning having a barbell behind your neck and bend down. For the first six months go to a 100 degree knee angle, after that you go down lower to the ideal table tennis angle of 90 degrees. Other important muscle groups are upper and lower back, abdominal, rotary cuff, and chest. Uppermost important muscle groups are the leg muscles that are sore. If you had to work hard with longer rallies at your maximum and it is very physically demanding. Often experienced players have injuries due to this. The legwork should emphasize hard work on the weak leg to create balance. In the Off and Pre-season for the first year. The weight should be measured by how many maximum repetitions can be done before you have to stop. The first set should be 15 reps, then 10-12 reps with more weights. The aerobic training can be done in a room with a variety of weights and machines. Run from 20 minutes to one hour at one speed with a pulse of about 70-80% of your maximum heart rate. The second year for players over 2400 (and over 17 years old), do weight training three times/week. This assumes a five sessions a week table tennis load together with the three sessions of weight training/week and three sessions of aerobic training a week. You work each body part only once a week. The rest time is crucial in strength training, and technical training will also work on those muscle groups, so be careful of over-training.

**Off-Season**

An example of a 2-day/week table tennis strength routine:

**Day 1**: Legs 10 sets, Calves 6, Abs 6.

**Day 2**: Chest 5 sets, Back 5, Shoulder 5, Lower back 3, Arms 4.

This should be your routine in the Off and Pre-season for the first year. The weight should be measured by how many maximum repetitions can be done before you have to stop. The first set should be 15 reps, then 10-12 reps with more weights. The aerobic training can be done in a room with a variety of weights and machines. Run from 20 minutes to one hour at one speed with a pulse of about 70-80% of your maximum heart rate.

The second year for players over 2400 (and over 17 years old), do weight training three times/week. This assumes a five sessions a week table tennis load together with the three sessions of weight training/week and three sessions of aerobic training a week. You work each body part only once a week. The rest time is crucial in strength training, and technical training will also work on those muscle groups, so be careful of over-training.

An example of a three-day/week table tennis strength routine:

**Day 1**: Quadriceps & Hamstrings 10 sets, Calves 6, Abs 4.

**Day 2**: Chest 6 sets, Shoulders 6, Triceps 3, Lower back 3, Abs 4.

**Day 3**: Back 6 sets, Biceps 3, Abs 4, Gluts 5.

The most common injuries for table tennis athletes are in shoulders, lats, and lower back. Back injuries can come from an imbalance in their upper body from having a weak non-playing arm side or imbalance in “starting” to “breaking” muscles. We have muscles that start the motion, which on the forehead are: rear deltoids, lats, triceps and mid gluts in the hips. If you play well and have been able to hit the ball harder than normal in a tournament then those are the muscles that are sore. If you had to work hard with longer rallies at your normal level, many times you feel sore in your legs and gluts.

**Pre-Season**

This training period emphasizes development of speed and explosiveness. In the weight routine you put in about 50% of explosive sets for each muscle group, which means slow at the negative movement and maximum speed at the positive movement of the exercise. The weight needs to be lowered to 50% of your 1 rep maximum and 10 repetitions per set. Example for bench press: You go down slow towards your chest, and fast up to straight arms. In the aerobic training you start interval training that resembles the times we have in table tennis. An 11-point game takes an average of 3-4 minutes, which is an equivalent time that most advanced players can run ½ mile. Then a rest time of one minute and repeat that 3-5 times, resembling table tennis rest-times and games.

**In-Season**

This training period is when important tournaments are taking place. Do both whole body weight training and aerobic training once a week each. The technical work is more demanding so most of your energy is used there. The goal is to maintain what you built up during the season.

**Transition Period**

Two weeks twice a year of active rest. Play table tennis once a week, or twice a week max, and run easy for 20 minutes three times/week. Play other sports once a week. Often athletes take a complete rest and lose almost all their fitness, and when they start the next season they lose a lot of valuable training time.

To execute the correct movements and techniques on a high level in table tennis it is very physically demanding. Often experienced players focus more time on their fitness compared to earlier in their careers. Eric Owens’ preparation when he won the 2001 Nationals in Men’s Singles and Doubles was mainly weight training and much less time on the table compared to previous years. Werner Schlager trains table tennis in his off-seasons only 3 times/week, but spends time with physical training every day. Europe cannot copy the high-level national Chinese training environment with professional practice partners and hours of multi-ball each day, but they keep up with more advanced physical training preparation. The Chinese now realize that and have started a new National Strength and Conditioning program in all sports. In the future the Chinese, with an improved physical training routine, might be invincible.
Ten Tips for Future Champions

By Jan-Ove Waldner

1989 & 1997 World Men's Singles Champion, 4-time World Men's Team Champion, 1992 Olympic Men's Singles Champion, 7-time European Top Twelve Men's Singles Champion, and many other titles. He is considered by many to be the greatest table tennis champion ever.

Excerpt from book “J-O Waldner: When the Feeling决定s,” by Jens Feltke, sold by Pioneers (www.ping-pong.com) and American Table Tennis (www.americanetabletennis.com)

1. Become a complete player

In order to win big titles, you must master play against all playing styles. Therefore, you must regularly practice and compete against players of different styles. The most important styles to embrace are loopers (maximum topspin), attackers (maximum speed) and choppers (maximum backspin).

Another important aspect is play against left-handed players. I would like to remind you that both right- and left-handed players spend 85% of their playing time playing against right-handed players. To be successful against both right- and left-handed players requires well-developed technique and very good balance.

I have had the advantage of practicing a lot with left-handed players, e.g. Mikael Appelgren and Ulf Thorsell in my first club Spårvägen. Later on, in the Swedish national team, left-handed players were well represented: Appelgren again, Stellan Bengtsson, Erik Lindh, Ulf Bengtsson, Thomas von Scheele and Peter Nilsson.

2. Acquire point-winning weapons

Table tennis is a tough sport, exercised under a high level of stress. Often you have to play many matches per day. Therefore, it is important to be able to win simple and quick points.

I have always been able to rely upon my serves, frequently directly point-winning. I have furthermore worked hard to follow up my serves with a varying forehand stroke.

Send some time analyzing which point-winning weapons you already possess. And remember that new weapons can be developed!

3. Develop a relaxed technique

Table tennis requires a tremendous amount of practice. Always try to play as relaxed as possible. This will increase your chances to play relaxed even in tight situations and at the same time decrease your susceptibility for injuries.

Personally, I have managed to avoid lengthy injuries, which is one of the reasons why I have been able to remain at the top for so many years.

4. Play a lot while young

Table tennis requires advanced motor coordination and dexterity. It is therefore important that you learn technically as much as possible before the age of about 13. As long as you still have fun, practice and compete as often as possible.

Use your imagination by continuously trying out new strokes, even during matches. Try a new strategy in the middle of a game. Consider a deuce in the deciding game as a challenge to test your most effective serve, or a new type of serve return.

Remember that your career in table tennis is quite long. When feeling bad about a loss, try to think instead about the next tournament and how you can improve.

5. Master three distances

Many players master play from only one or two distances. My recommendation is that you consciously practice play from all three distances after the bounce as indicated below:

Distance 1 - ball on its way up: You hit the ball after it has reached its highest point after bounce. You should learn to use short and quick strokes with little backswing.

Distance 2 - ball at its highest point: You should learn to use a relaxed technique when hitting the ball at its highest point after the bounce. A large variety of strokes can be successfully applied at this distance.

Distance 3 - ball on its way down: You hit the ball after it has reached its highest point after bounce, on its way down. This distance requires a technique where you use a large forearm movement before ball impact.

6. Study good players

Watch as much table tennis as possible. Study video recordings, both of yourself and world class players. In particular, I used to study the Hungarian player Tibor Klapar. His wrist movements and ball hits were of extraordinary quality. By studying a number of Chinese players, I learned to appreciate the importance of developing effective serves.

Try to imitate certain players in order to get a better understanding of advantages and disadvantages of different playing styles, racket grips, movement patterns, etc. In the Swedish national team, we have throughout the years very much enjoyed mimicking different players. Erik Lindh is a master at imitating many of our opponents.

7. Analyze your opponents

Only when you are up against a player the first time can you get an appreciation of, for instance, the quality of his or her forehand loop. Therefore, enlist the help of those of your pals who have played the person in question. Bring forward to discussion all relevant details. Remember that there are many ways to win matches in table tennis. The better prepared you are, the greater are your chances. The margins in this game sometimes appear minuscule, but it is always the best and most professional player who profits from them.

8. Use your head

Mental strength is a vast and important subject and perhaps the most difficult characteristic to develop through training. Personally, I have developed a way to think and act that I believe suits my personality. The starting point must be yourself, in my opinion.

Mental strength is based on experience and acquired knowledge about your sport. Listen to the advice of others who you trust but remember that, in the final analysis, you must rely upon your own judgment.

When I was younger, I studied in detail many successful Swedish athletes, including Björn Borg (tennis) and Ingemar Stenmark (alpine skiing). I was impressed by their calmness when competing. Over the years, I have learned to analyze my losses and then forget them as quickly as possible. To the contrary, I do carry around memories of my victories in order to boost my self-confidence.

9. Be respectful

A table tennis match is decided in a short time, and it does not take much to lose by underestimating your opponent. It is important to grudgingly accept losses and to show respect for your opponent. Whether I win or not, my strategy has always been to keep a low profile.

10. Think long-term

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that it takes a long time to become a good table tennis player. There are always new things to learn. Try to think long-term and avoid focusing too much on results when you are young.

If you aspire to compete with the best, you must walk a narrow road. You must realize that only a large amount of training, and tough training, will lead to the goal. The principle applies both to training at the table and to physical conditioning.

However, don’t forget to now and then have some fun and experiment a bit. Occasionally, you will discover something that will be useful in match play. Good luck!
### TOP OLYMPIC ELIGIBLE MEN

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### Tournaments Processed

This list was compiled on 04/02/05 (ages are as of that date) and includes all tournaments received through 03/20/05. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played since 11/15/04 are included. This list may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2005.

### 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, USA Table Tennis, USA Head-Quarter, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. To find out your rating you can 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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(Continued)
May 7 – OKC Team Tournament, Oklahoma, OK. Contact: Dale Goodman/David Hash, 405-410-5888. dalegoodman@tinker.af.mil. 
May 7 – Cary Open Giant RR Jambo-ree #3, Apex, NC. Contact: Jim McQueen Jr., 919-787-3788. jmcqueen@ncrr.com. 0 Star
May 7 – Maine Spring Open, Lewiston, ME. Contact: Richard Shea, 207-782-7018. nsha@auburnschl.edu. 0 Star
May 7 – Power Pong May Open, Fountain Valley, CA. Contact: Vi Bloom, 562-430-9026. halbloom@dslxtreme.com. 
May 28 – Northern KY Spring 2005 RR Open, Ft. Thomas, KY. Contact: Greg Thompson, 859-781-5050. gthomas@hotmail.com. 
May 28-29 – Matthew Murad Memorial Open On the 2005 Stiga NA Tour, Boysd, MD. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. info@natetabletennis.com. 
June 4 – Grand Canyon State Summer Games, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Len Winkler, 602-678-1234. len@tabletennisandmore.com. State Games 
June 4-5 – Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
June 4-5 – Meiklejohn National Seniors Open, Laguna Woods, CA. Contact: Ray Kunze, 949-583-1695. rkanze@fca.net. 
June 9-10 – Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
June 9-10 – MDTTC June Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 301-916-4862. weixiao42@hotmail.com. 
June 12 – Brooklyn Open, Brooklyn, NY. Contact: Brooklyn TTC, 718-421-2200. esuen1972@yahoo.com. 
June 12 – Brooklyn June Open, Brooklyn, NY. Contact: Brooklyn TTC, 718-421-2200. esuen1972@yahoo.com. 
July 7-10 – 2005 Liebherr U.S. Open – a Major ITTF Pro Tour Event – and the Killerspin U.S. Open, Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Contact: Joyce Grooms, USA TT, 719-866-4583, admin@usatt.org. 
July 7-10 – Brooklyn Open, Brooklyn, NY. Contact: Brooklyn TTC, 718-421-2200. esuen1972@yahoo.com. 
July 7-10 – 2005 Stiga NA Tour, Easton, PA. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. info@natetabletennis.com. 
July 16 – Annual Wild Bill Hickok Open, Abilene, KS. Contact: Clifford Metzger, 785-823-6844. 
July 16 – Cary Open Giant RR Jambo-ree #5, Apex, NC. Contact: Jim McQueen Jr., 919-787-3788. jmcqueen@ncrr.com. 0 Star
July 16 – 1st Annual Wild Bill Hickok Open, Abilene, KS. Contact: Clifford Metzger, 785-823-6844. 
July 23 – Eastern Open on the 2005 Stiga NA Tour, Piscataway, NJ. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. info@natetabletennis.com. 
July 22-24 – Ctrl FL Summer Open & FL Cup Team Champ., Lakeland, FL. Contact: Raymond Spann, 863-965-0760. TableTennis@verizon.net. 
Welcome to the inaugural four-star Le Chi Athletic Association West Covina Table Tennis Open! This event was a spectacular extravaganza, complete with opening ceremonies and fantastic table tennis featuring world class players from USA, Canada, and Europe.

Opening ceremonies on Friday night began with a parade of athletes, followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony, welcoming speeches from the Le Chi Athletic Association officers and West Covina city council members. A short table tennis exhibition by Le Chi table tennis players ensued, followed by numerous ethnic dances and choir singing. To finish the evening, the national anthem was played, and an Asian team exhibition tournament was held to kick the event off. The winner of the exhibition tournament was the Vietnamese Association led by Khoo Nguyen with the Le Chi Athletic Association coming in second place.

On Saturday, 332 players came and crammed into the Cameron Park Center and competed in 25 events on 27 Butterfly Europa tables. As soon as the players entered the venue that Saturday, they could feel the anticipation of an exciting tournament in the air. So let’s go to the action, and as they say, “Ladies first...”

Open Women’s Final RR

The women’s finals would be played as a three-way round robin. One of the finalists was the top-seeded Crystal Huang, a left-handed reverse penholt backhand player, and the local favorite from the Los Angeles area. The other finalists were Renata Peluchova, a left-handed shakehand attacker from New York, and Lily Yip, a right-handed pips-out penholder from New Jersey.

The first match of the three-way round robin was Peluchova vs. Huang, and Peluchova won 6-3. In the second match, Yip defeated Peluchova, 9-6, 12. Thanks to this 3-0 victory, Yip clinched at least second place. So going into the final match against Huang, if Yip takes just one game, that would give her the championship. For Huang, she needs to beat Yip 3-0 for the championship, and any sort of win will give her second over Peluchova. Peluchova cannot control her own destiny, and must root for Yip to beat Huang, as that would give her second place. And so we move to...

Match 3: Crystal Huang vs. Lily Yip

Knowing all this, lefty Huang comes out firing with her reverse-penholder backhand loop, and quickly jumps out to a 5-1 lead. Huang is definitely moving well, and is assertive on the offense. However, Yip is efficient with her blocking and moves Huang around. Yip is able to close the gap to only two points at 8-6, but Huang pulls away to win the first set, 11-7.

Huang is still alive for the championship! She keeps up her aggressive attack to start off the second game. She starts with a backhand loop miss, but makes an inside-out forehand, and the game starts off 1-1. It’s then Yip’s turn to make a move as she reols off four straight points on a backhand stick block, a forehand smash kill, a drop kill, and a rally point. It’s now 5-1 in favor of Yip, and that championship looks halfway in her grasp.

But Huang isn’t giving anything away for free, and starts her comeback. Her comeback really gets going when she gets to within 6-4 on a fantastic counter-smashing rally featuring multiple smashes by both players. Wow! The two trade points. Up 9-7, Yip just kills the ball crosscourt deep into Huang’s backhand, but Huang somehow counters the smash with her backhand loop! Wooww! Huang follows that up with a step around forehand smash to tie things up at 9-9. Somebody call 911, we’ve got a woman on fire here!!!!

OK, nobody called 911, but Yip busts out the metaphorical fire hydrant by calling a time out. Clearly, this is it. This is where she is going to make her stand for the championship.

I guess the time out wasn’t enough to cool off Huang, as she takes the first point on a backhand loop to get the first game point. Yip fights to deuce it up, and we’ve got a battle on our hands.

The players exchange a couple of nervously played misses for another deuce. Then Yip wins a spectacular counter-smashing rally featuring multiple backhand loops by Huang and multiple forehand smashes by Yip! Wow! Yip converts her first game point immediately as Huang makes an unforced error. That was championship point, and Yip knows it. She pumps her fist in the air and gives out a victorious scream!

It’s all done for Yip, but Huang still has something to play for. A win for her and she gets second and a $400 prize; a loss and she gets third and zero dollars. So with Huang motivated and Yip with nothing to play for, one would think that Huang would dominate. However, this was a perfect example how a relaxed player plays much better, as Yip just couldn’t miss. With no tension in her body, Yip just moved so much faster and her touch was totally fantastic. Huang was pressing, and really had no chance. Yip took the last game -7,12,5,6, leaving no doubt who the top woman was that weekend.

Men’s Semifinals

Thomas Keinad vs. Atanda Musa

Both players are aggressive two-winged loopers, but it’s a battle of the 21-year-old Keinad and Musa, about twice Keinad’s age. The match turned out to be a complete German Blitzkrieg. Keinad just put on a two-winged looping show, with the crowd in admiration. In the end, it was a 4-0 (6,2,9,6) victory for Keinad, and a low rumble goes through the audience, as people are wondering if anyone can even take a game off the German today.

David Zhuang vs. Barney Reed Jr.

Reed draws first blood in game one, 11-6. He stays hot in game two, going up 5-2. Zhuang then goes to his high toss serve, and utilizes his block against Reed’s loop, getting a few errors and ties the game up at 5-5.

The high, High, HIGH toss serve of Open Champion David Zhuang
Scenes from the
Le Gui West Govina Open
Photos by Sungill Kim ©2005
**New Hampshire RR**

**Manchester, NH · Feb. 13, 2005**

New Hampshire

Champ

Rich DeWitt

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**Power Pong Open**

**Fountain Valley, CA · Jan. 29, 2005**

- **Open:** 1st Bamey J. Reed; 2nd Khai Duong.
- **U2300:** 1st Trung Nguyen; 2nd Mohammed Imam Pariani.
- **U2150:** 1st Brett Swanson; 2nd Peter Straka.
- **U2000:** 1st Antonio Robles; 2nd Peter Straka.
- **U1800:** 1st Franck Gascoin; 2nd Sinisa B. Dragojlovic.
- **U1700:** 1st Marco Sanchez, Jr.; 2nd Marco Sanchez.
- **Over 40/U1650:** 1st Sinisa B. Grgijevic; 2nd Pierre Hachuche.
- **U1600:** 1st Marco Sanchez; 2nd Antonio Robles.
- **U1500:** 1st Xinya Liao; 2nd Jeff Hill.
- **U1400:** 1st Alex Litvak; 2nd Jessica Samuels.
- **U1300:** 1st Yahia Karim; 2nd Mark Perencho.
- **U1200:** 1st Douglas Grant; 2nd Chad Bogasian.
- **U1100:** 1st Jessica Samuels; 2nd Jordan Fisher.
- **Novice:** 1st Peter Wen; 2nd Jessica Samuels.
- **Under 18:** 1st Brana Vlasic; 2nd Jonathan Y. Chen.
- **Under 14:** 1st Jonathan Y. Chen; 2nd Donald Chan.
- **Under 12:** 1st Armand Engineer; 2nd Erick Shahnazari.
- **Elementary School:** 1st Erick Shahnazari; 2nd Jasmine Nguyen.
- **Parent/Child Doubles:** 1st Roberts/Roberts; 2nd Shahnazari/Shahnazari.
- **U3700 Doubles:** 1st Ngo/Jordan; 2nd Bu/Nguyen.
- **L3200 Doubles:** 1st Tran/Le; 2nd Luna Kishimoto.

**Cleveland Winter Open**

**Cleveland, OH · Jan. 22-23, 2005**

- **Open:** 1st Mark Nordby; 2nd Samson Dubina; 3rd Nick Snider; 4th Larry Hawkins, Sr.
- **Elite:** 1st Samson Dubina; 2nd Mark Nordby; 3rd Nick Snider; 4th Amanda Dubina.
- **Women:** 1st Amanda Dubina; 2nd Svetlana Rose.
- **Over 40:** 1st Larry Hawkins, Sr.; 2nd Sam Steiner.
- **Over 50:** 1st Tadao Inui; 2nd Valery Eltunayov.
- **Over 60:** 1st Dean Norman; 2nd Don Henderson.
- **Under 21:** 1st Samson Dubina; 2nd Amanda Dubina.
- **Under 18:** 1st Simon Kreyman; 2nd Alicia Barnett.
- **Under 15:** 1st Simon Kreyman; 2nd Michael Bailey.
- **Hardbat:** 1st Cliff Sullivan; 2nd Frank Uliano.
- **U2400:** 1st Samson Dubina; 2nd Mark Nordby.
- **U2150:** 1st Larry Hawkins, Sr.; 2nd Alex Mehrabian.
- **U1900:** 1st Hernaat Mantri; 2nd Tadao Inui.
- **U1750:** 1st Scott Dallton; 2nd Vladimir Giszpenc.
- **U1650:** 1st Vladimir Giszpenc; 2nd Mike Wilson.
- **U1500:** 1st Alex Sugar; 2nd Vladimir Giszpenc.
- **U1400:** 1st Eric Maskey; 2nd Matthew Forstye.
- **U150:** 1st Randy McCracken; 2nd George Rizk.
- **U900:** 1st Michael Bailey; 2nd Keith Peck.
- **Unrated:** 1st Shao-Sheng Dong; 2nd Corey Overholt.

**Arkansas State Championships**

**Little Rock, AR · Feb. 5, 2005**

- **Open:** 1st Jamey Hall; 2nd Andy Bloxom.
- **Women:** 1st Xin Fu; 2nd Joyce Hartmann.
- **Open Doubles:** 1st William Hall/Bud Caughman; 2nd Jim Meredith/Paul Chuftield.
- **Mixed Doubles:** 1st Yujin Ding/Xiu Ye; 2nd Kerry Huey/Xin Fu.
- **Over 40:** 1st Glen Davis; 2nd Paul Chuftield.
- **Over 60:** 1st John Smithely; 2nd Lee Morgans.
- **Over 60 Consolation:** 1st Ben Phillips; 2nd Chris Sabas.
- **Junior:** 1st Don Ding; 2nd Bradley Moffitt.
- **Class A:** 1st Murali Hanumanthakari; 2nd Anop Seedibbood.
- **Class B:** 1st Kitt Oudthone; 2nd Gus Richards.
- **Class C:** 1st Xin Fu; 2nd Mark Lieb.
- **U1800:** 1st Vifal Mhapaseker; 2nd Yujin Ding.
- **U1600:** 1st Murali Hanumanthakari; 2nd Terry Huey.
- **U1450:** 1st Michael Hunter; 2nd Kitt Oudthone.
- **U1200:** 1st Cliff Li; 2nd Jeff Pascoe.
- **U1000:** 1st Jason Barrington; 2nd Don Ding.
- **U850:** 1st Mark Hammond; 2nd Bradley Moffitt.
- **Hardbat:** 1st Gus Richards; 2nd Steve Cates.
- ** wildcard:** 1st Jay Lacey; 2nd John Falco.
- **Class A Doubles:** 1st Jamey Hall/Glen Davis; 2nd Andy Bloxom/Paul Chuftield.
**Michigan Closed**

Fenton, MI - March 19-20, 2005

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**Michigan Under 14**

**Champion: Allen Lin**

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**Men's Singles**

**Final RR**

1. Daniel Cobb, 2-1 (d. Veillette, 4-1; d. Endicott, 4-2); 2. Bence Toth, 2-1 (d. Oladokun, 4-3; d. Endicott, 4-0); 3. Mike Veillette, 2-1 (d. Oladokun, 4-3; d. Endicott, 4-0); 4. Scott Endicott, 0-3. (Note - in 3-way tie, Cobb was 6-5. Oladokun 7-6. Veillette 5-7).

**Open Doubles**

Mike Veillette/Mike Baber d. Tajudeen Oladokun/Scott Endicott, 3-0.

Over 40: Tajudeen Oladokun/Scott Endicott d. Mike Veillette, 3-2.

Over 40 Doubles: Tajudeen Oladokun/Dave Skrzypek d. Mike Veillette/Mike Baber, 2-3.

Over 50: Larry Wood d. Dave Peradotto, 3-2.

Over 60: Bob Quinn d. Carl Meredith, 3-0.

Under 18: Bence Toth d. Danny Dulkin, 3-0.

Under 18 Doubles: Bence Toth/Allen Lin d. Danny Dulkin/Donald Hinshaw, 3-1.

Under 16: Danny Dulkin d. Bence Toth, 3-1.

Under 14: Allen Lin d. Zhao Wang, 3-0.

Under 12: Alexander Hazid d. Christopher Hazit, 3-1.


Under 8: Mike Veillette/Allen Lin d. Bob Garza, 3-1.


Under 4: Mike Veillette d. Steve Dawson, 3-1.


Under 2500 Doubles: James Keep/Phillip Landan d. Terry Robinson/Lee McCool, 4-2.

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**Ben Hill Stiga Open**

Atlanta, GA - Jan. 1-2, 2005


Class B: 1. Uko Akpannabak; 2. Edward Komlanyi.


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**Davison January Open**

Davison, MI - Jan. 29, 2005


Davison, MI - Feb. 29, 2005


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**Davison February Open**

Davison, MI - Feb. 19, 2005


Class B: 1. Uko Akpannabak; 2. Edem Aire.


Class B first place prize money. Stay home if you can’t handle jigs as pigs out-takers took second in Class B and first and second in Class C. Despite a slow start, champion Chris O’Brian and runner-up Ira Goodman dominated Class D. Milind Phadke had a great first round, earning himself a spot in Class A after starting out seeded 25th out of 32. Players from Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and from all over North Carolina rounded out the home town club players to make it a fun & competitive event.

Thanks to Wendell Dillon for officiating and delivering the referee seminar, and our sponsors Stiga, Paddle Palace, Van Cleaners and Charlotte TTC.

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**Davison March Open**

Davison, MI - Mar. 12, 2005


U2250: 1. Dennis Cobb; 2. jim Burton.


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**Dixie Giant RR**

Univ. of South Miss. - Feb. 19, 2005


Sponsors: USMTTC and USM Rec Sports Dept.

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**USA Table Tennis Magazine**

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Stiga Virginia Open
Charlottesville, VA • March 12-13, 2005

By David Del Vecchio

About a hundred competitors from around the mid-Atlantic region converged on the campus of the University of Virginia on March 12 for the largest table tennis tournament in the state: the first-ever Stiga Virginia Open. Hosted by the UVA Table Tennis Club, the event was made possible through the generous support of the UVA Parents Program, Table Tennis Pioneers (pingpong.com), the Charlottesville Table Tennis Club and a number of other local companies. Large contingents from the Richmond area (both the club and the city’s Asian community) and from the Virginia Tech Table Tennis Club turned out, in addition to a smattering of players from Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina and other nearby states. Held at the University of Virginia’s newly expanded Aquatic and Fitness Center, competitors were treated to 18 large playing courts on clean wood floors in the brightly lit facility.

After a few technical glitches delayed registration slightly, tournament director David Marcus (creator of RatingsCentral) soon had matches underway with little slowdown in the ping-pong action from then on. The morning’s round robins for the upper-level rating events gave way to the Open Singles, Junior, Senior and Doubles events in the afternoon. Raghu Nadmichettu of Maryland edged Larry Hodges in five games to win the Under 2200 event, but couldn’t carry enough of this momentum into the Open Singles, losing to Khaleel Asgarali three straight games in the semifinals. The other semifinal pitted top-seed Sean O’Neill against lefty Meng Lian (rated 2314) of the University of Tennessee. While both players had some difficulty keeping their serves short, Sean was better able to control the points with well-placed opening loops. Sean also managed a couple of impressive counterloop winners wide to Meng’s forehand, much to the delight of the local crowd.

Open Singles: Vitaliy Deyak d. Lixin Lang, 10.-6, 6.-7, 6.-5, 9.-7. SF: Deyak d. Raghunadmichettu, 8,7.9, 9, 8.-5. 6.-7.

U1150: Daniel Kokotoved, Matthew Sedlock, 9, 8.6, 9, 9. 8.-5.

U1900: Charlie Sun d. Vincent Ning, 9,-11,-7, 6, 9.

U2100: Diego Nepomnaschiy d. Patrick Lui, 9, 11, 2, 9, 6, 6.

U2200: Raghu Nadmichettu d. Larry Hodges, 3, 6, 7, 7, 8.


U1650: Xinini Pappasdas, Keahah Kotitari, 6, 9, 6, 11.

U1400: Xiaoguang Wen d. Lany Hodges, 8, 9.

U1200: Robert Coltrin d. Ray Hopkins, 6, 5, 7, 12.

U1000: 1st) Jeffrey Glazer; 2nd) CB Sullivan.

Open Doubles: Khaleel Asgarali/Sean ONeill d. Lixin Lang, 5, 8, 11.

U2200: Raghu Nadmichettu/Larry Hodges, 3, 6, 7, 7.

U2000: Martin Del Vecchio/Patrick Kubat, 9, 10.

U1800: Eric Dung d. Bowen Caldwell, 8, 5, 10, 5.


U1400: Thomas Marley d. George Williams, 9, 6, 3, 9.

U1200: Robert Coltrin d. Ray Hopkins, 6, 8, 10.


Unrated: Sheng-Ts Yang d. Collin Martin, 2, 9, 8.

Over 40: Xiaoguang Wen/Sean ONeill, 9, 8.


Open - Final: Han Xiao d. James Duan, 9, 4, 6, 3, 8.


Open Doubles: Khaleel Asgarali/Sean ONeill d. Meng Lian/Xiaoguang Wen, 8, 1, 5.

U1650: Raghu Nadmichettu/Larry Hodges, 3, 6, 7, 7.

U2000: Martin Del Vecchio/Patrick Kubat, 9, 10.

U1800: Eric Dung d. Bowen Caldwell, 8, 5, 10, 5.


U1400: Thomas Marley d. George Williams, 9, 6, 3, 9.

U1200: Robert Coltrin d. Ray Hopkins, 6, 8, 10.


Unrated: Sheng-Ts Yang d. Collin Martin, 2, 9, 8.

Over 40: Xiaoguang Wen/Larry Hodges, 9, 8.


John Vos Memorial Mini-Medallion
Frostburg, MD • Feb. 26, 2005

By C. James Williams

Our tournament to honor John Vos began with prayer and stories of the support John gave to the many table tennis events he attended. A few moist eyes told the tales. Play started in front of a mob of eight spectators. With play limited to two tables, most action was observed and cheered lustily.

The range of players was from beginner to top seed at 1800. The mix of styles was also wide, from penholder topspinner to hardbat chopper, from looper to flat hitter, and gave the audience a variety of sights to please all.

The round robins moved quickly, and soon advanced to the semifinal crossovers: Tom Huff (hardbat chopper) versus Ron Harp (looper), and Alex Gao (penhold topspinner) versus Xiaowen Wu (penhold hitter).

The final was Huff vs. Gao, chopper versus topspinner. Huff won the first 11-9. Perhaps an upset? However, the previous match against Harp was taking its toll, and Gao rallied to win the match and championship, 9-6, 8-5.

There was money for the top four and trophies for 5-8. Hong Han, newly arrived in the U.S., won the “Hardest Competition” award. Thanks to all who helped out.

Results: 1st) Alex Gao; 2nd) Ron Harp; 3rd) Tom Huff & Xiaowen Wu.
**South Eastern Open**

The first USATT sanctioned tournament in more than 20 years!

**Newport News, VA - Feb. 19-20, 2005 - By Hiip Tran**

First of all, we would like to say thank you to all players who participated and helped out in our successful first tournament. Our tournament staff members, Tommy Tran and David Jung, did a wonderful job of keeping the tournament running smoothly. We also need to say thank you to Table Tennis Pioneers, Mr. Tom Manley and the City of Newport News for their club and tournament sponsorships.

NNTTC was started by Hiip Tran in September 2004, with the help of Bernard Eballar, Dan Barrett, and Morris Abraham and funding from the City of Newport News and Mr. Tom Manley (President of the TCElectric). The club now has 12 tables and more than 90 barriers. Within four months, NNTTC has 42 active members at all ages and levels. It was an honor for us to host the first USATT sanctioned tournament in the Hampton Roads area in more than 20 years.

There were more than 55 contestants of all ages and skill levels from the states of Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia.

In the Final of Open Singles, Vitaliy Deyak and Hiip Tran had no problem going from the preliminary round to the final. Hiip Tran played a great match against Vitaliy Deyak. Deyak won the first game, and Tran managed to win the second game to tie it at 1-1. Deyak pulled away and won the match with consistent and powerful attacks. Deyak won over Tran 4-1. Deyak also defeated Tran in the Under 2200 final, 3-0.

Under 2050 was full of surprises. In the preliminary round, Vivin Deshpande, estimated 1599, defeated Simon Brain (1956). Roger Martin (1770) had his best tournament ever, beating both Jim McQueen (2018) and Simon Brain (1956). Unfortunatley, he lost in the quarterfinals to the eventual winner, Hiip Tran.

In the final of Under 1900, Robert McCalla demonstrated the consistency of his forehand loop throughout the event as he overcame Michael Wilkner 3-2 in the most intense match of the tournament.

Vivin Deshpande dominated the Under 1750 event, beating Morris Abrum 3-0 in the final.

Richard Council consistently fought for every point throughout the Under 1600 event, and the hard work paid off. He won the event by defeating Hui Cao 3-0 in the final.

The second day of the South Eastern Open was no less exciting than the first day. 66-year-old Orlando Terry, "the man of the tournament," dominated the Under 1400 and Over 55 events, winning them over Thomas Manley and Edward Sobolote, respectively. Everyone had a hard time playing against Terry because he plays with anti-spin rubbers on both sides, and is a two-winged attacker. Yes, you heard it right. Terry was as hard to beat as you can smash the ball with inverted or pipes.

Hae-Soo Jeong, a Korean female player, dominated the Under 1200 event, defeating John Merritt from Maryland in the final, 3-1.

**Orlando Winter Open**

Orlando, FL - Jan. 29-30, 2005 - By Olga Soltesz

Happy New Year to everyone! Our Winter Open tournament was a wonderful success. Keith Albam was the winner of the main event over Ben Johnson. Keith hadn’t come up for our tournament in several years so it was good seeing him again. Ben Johnson is our defending Florida State Champion and he will be defending his title in August. Two great players who act like true gentlemen.

Another true gentlemen, Kit Jeerapac, won the Under 2250 Singles. Orlando had five winners this tournament. Kristosim Tenev won both Under 2250 and Under 1900 titles, and Scott Plakon were winners in Under 1650, Under 1500 and Under 1300, respectively. A wonderful junior player, David Kirk, won the Under 13 event and was runner-up in the Under 18 event. David is a wonderful little athlete who smiles, wins or lose.

Miami has many good players and they always win several events. No exception this tournament. Bin Hai Chu won the over 40’s and Carlos Estrada won the over 55’s. Marv and Carson Left, long-time wonderful little athlete who smiles, win or lose.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE - May/June 2005
What can be said about a family of boys who dedicate so much time and effort to the sport of table tennis. Each so special in their own way – all so different from each other – all with table tennis in common and all Champions in their own right. Earl, DJ and John-John have already accomplished so much in their young years. The faithful support of their father and the inspiration they must feel from their mother’s spirit looking over them is seen and felt in everything they do. The SDTTA, the club’s Junior coaches, and sponsors JUIC & Paddle Palace present...the Alto brothers.

Earl James Alto
Earl, 16, was born in Quezon City in the Philippines, loves music and math and is very dedicated to a number of sports. Earl started playing table tennis at Mira Mesa Recreation Center in San Diego at the age of 11 and has a current USATT rating of 2195 (but was recently over 2200). His all-time favorite club coaches include Don Kim, Wen Tsay, Tom Plaisted, Ron Spencer and Jock Oubiehon. Earl’s biggest inspiration is, of course, his mom, who unexpectedly passed away last year. His father Raul comments that Earl’s greatest respect at the SDTTA is for Pam Ramsey, Clark Mitchell, Neil Smyth and president Art Pintado, who along with the coaches that work with them, are very proud of each Alto boy. Earl’s strongest table tennis rival is, undoubtedly, his younger brother (DJ), who he is extremely close to...and protective of. On the table, Earl is a fighter and extremely focused on each hit of the ball. He is very fun loving, responsible and mature, on and off the table, which may have contributed to why he was nominated the 2003 California State Games “Athlete of the Year” at the age of 14 and why he was recently selected to have a seat on the SDTTA Board as a Junior Rep.

Earl's Major Titles Include:
- 2003, 2004 California State Games Junior Champion
- 2003 California State Games Junior Doubles Champion (with DJ)
- 2004 California Junior Doubles Champion with Johnny Simkin
- 2004 California State Games Open Doubles Silver Medalist (with DJ)
- 2004 All Filipino Open Singles Champion
- 2004 All Filipino Team Champion
- 2004 National Champion Under 2200
- 2004 Fifth Place in the USA Junior Team Trials

Don James (DJ) Alto
Twelve-year-old DJ was also born in the Philippines and has the most NATURAL talent for table tennis in the family. The first time I saw him play at age 7, he was already looping players off the table – all with no formal training or coaching. Immediately I encouraged his father to keep that boy playing. I saw a champion in him at day one. “Dej” also shares a love of music and math like Earl, but at the same time – as his dad puts it – is very dedicated and respectful. DJ tends to be more goofy and lazy during practice time. (I can see the coaches all laughing their head yes right now). Raul also states that DJ’s strongest rival is his big brother, but at a very respectable way. Last summer, we watched DJ literally walk through some former top SDTTA players during a closed club tournament. His opponents just laughed and shook their heads – what else could they do? I noticed that DJ’s playing style has changed a bit over the last few months, with him attacking everything coming at him...from the serve and beyond. Last December at the USA Nationals, DJ made the USAATT’s Cadet Boys’ Team. His current USAATT rating is 2179...Now if we only get him to be more SERIOUS at the table...

DJ’s Major Titles Include:
- 2005 Le-Chi West Covina Under 15 Boys’ Champion
- 2005 Le-Chi West Covina Under 18 Boys’ Semifinalist
- 2004 California State Games Men’s Open Bronze Medalist
- 2004 California State Games Open Doubles Silver Medalist (with Earl)
- 2004 California State Games Under 15 Boys’ Champion
- 2004 Nationals Under 2000 Semifinalist
- 2004 Member of the USA National Cadet Team
- 2003 Nationals Finalist Under 1900
- 2003 California State Games Jr. Silver Medalist
- 2003 California State Games Athlete of the Year (Table Tennis)
- 2003 SDTTA Jr. Club Championship Runner-up
- 2002 December #1 rated Under 10 in USA

John James Alto
Little John-John ...the adorable kid with the BIG brown eyes and angelic smile has obviously been around table tennis all his life. I remember him just a year ago, bouncing up and down and turning around in circles with every hit of the ball, goofing around and just having fun being a kid. He kept us all entertained, but at the same time, we knew he had a little something special in there that would make him a champ. He had so much extra energy, I didn’t think he’d ever get serious, but at the ripe ‘ol age of 10, is already coming around and may eventually leave his two older brothers in the dust. He has no fear of asking older, more experienced players to hit. How could you resist? Look at that face! John-John is being coached by the SDTTA’s Junior Program Coaches: Tom Plaisted, Ron Spencer and Jock Oubiehon...who all believe he has the potential to be a G-R-E-A-T player. With a current USAATT rating of 1212, he already has steady training partners with the Vlasic sisters - Mina (1699 Rating) and Brana (USATT rating 2004) and is starting to beat the more experienced and veteran players at the SDTTA. He has already developed a killer serve and slams the ball past his opponents. Watch out America...Alto Bro #3 is going to be dangerous.

John-John’s Major Titles Include:
- 2005 Le-Chi West Covina Under 10 Boys’ finalist.
- 2004 Nationals Under 10 Semifinalist
- 2004 Nationals Under 1100 Semifinalist
- 2004 Nationals Quarterfinal Under 1200

Mama Alto must be extremely PROUD and her spirit can be felt in every breath they take, every sparkle in their eyes and every stroke they make. To us, the boys are all winners and they are all extremely SPECIAL.
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The main battle zones in table tennis are clearly distinct—back from the table (“the long game”) and over the table (“the short game”). Soon after they begin, players start working on their long game. They learn how to maintain rallies. This is the natural progression of player development, because the off-the-table strokes are larger and easier to develop. But this sequence does not correspond with the development of a game point, where the point starts short and then develops into the long game. Consequently, there is a

Most people’s first experience with the short game is the push. A player who has made this technique into a veritable art form is 2000 Olympic Champion Kong Linghui. His ability to push practically any ball he chooses allows him to maintain such a high degree of variety in his game, that even ten years after his victory at the Tianjin World Championships, nobody counts him out for a top finish at the World Championships in Shanghai this coming May.

The intensity that generates such a severe ball, one that even top-level players loop into the bottom of the net. As soon as the ball is played, he relaxes the arm, steps back and gets ready to perform an equally intense follow-up shot, again going through the complete cycle of relaxation, positioning and tight stroke performance.

Short ball practice is often neglected, because players are not clear about its importance, or they’re not so sure about what
stage in many players' development during which they have a relatively accomplished practice game, but they can not translate it into competitive success because they can't get past the beginning stage of the point. To be competitive at a higher level, the short game is important, because with increasing level, the opponent's ability to play the ball short improves.

While the techniques relating to each "zone" are different, they are closely related. Once you understand the mechanics for the long game strokes, you can translate them to the short game. The essential differences, of course, are the much shorter time one has to react, and the fact that the table is in the way and does not allow large strokes. This causes many players to reach for the ball, disconnecting the solid coordination between legs, upper body and arm. A flailing arm can never produce an accurate shot. To maintain the integrity of one's stroke one needs to shift the center of gravity forward, maintaining a solid base by stepping deeply under the table. When I teach the body position for short ball play, I ask my students to pretend the first two feet of their side of the table do not exist, and to step in until they touch the table.

There is no way to lengthen the time it takes for a short ball to bounce on our side of the table, so the only solution to buy time is to shorten our reaction time. In approximately 60 milliseconds we can't compute everything we need to know, so we need a solidly preprogrammed and practiced set of responses. You can develop those by thinking about these game situations away from the table, at the club or at home. Think about each possible permutation and how you would respond. This is when you develop strategies. Once you have decided on a set that works for you, practice until the responses become second nature. You reduce the number of decisions you have to make in that short time to one or two, such as adjusting your placement to the opponent's position, or your preference of how to continue that particular point.

When we analyze techniques, we usually talk about specific sequences of movements, where to position which part of the body and where to contact the ball. But there is an additional component to a high-level game, one which accounts for the many different levels of play and which frequently delineates the distinction between a very good player, and a merely good one: the shot's intensity.

A player may perform a technique perfectly, and to the average eye, it looks just the way it has to. But, among other factors, what makes a higher level is a player's ability to perform strokes with higher intensity, which creates much more spin. Partially, that is due to their better physical conditioning and training, which allows quicker acceleration and greater contact speed. But a big factor is their habit of performing each stroke with severity. There is always a distinct purpose and a considerable effort in their shot.

In frame 1, Kong has just made the decision to push the ball. He pulls his racket hand up and forward toward the ball while stepping in deeply with his right foot. At frame 4, he has made the final determination of the placement and spin. He now pulls the racket back toward his neck (4-5) while leaning toward the ball.

Frame 5 shows his upper body solidly supported by his right leg, which is deep under the table. The change in the ripple pattern of the muscles on his arm between frame 4 and 5 indicates the intensity of the stroke. His eyes are completely focused on the ball. Frames 5 through 8 happen in a tenth of a second (they're closer together in time than...
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