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Christian Lillieroos Leaves Texas Wesleyan
By B.J. Bellard

After four and a half years as head coach of the Texas Wesleyan University table tennis program, Christian Lillieroos bids the team and the sport goodbye as he moves on to head a forestry and investment company in Beijing, China. "But by no means am I leaving because I don't like it here or I'm tired of the team or the place – I enjoy this work very much," says Coach Lillieroos. "but I have an opportunity that is too good to pass up."

Christian will be the chief operating officer for the downtown subsidiary of the American Unity Investments Corporation in Beijing. In his role as general manager, he will maintain facility operations, develop and train a staff of approximately two hundred employees. He is expectant that his coaching background will allow him to bring forth the Western management and business philosophies, for which he has been hired.

In his tenure at TWU, Coach Lillieroos has brought the team to National Intercollegiate Table Tennis Championships four straight years (2002-2005) and he is a two-time USOC National Table Tennis Coach of the Year. He has coached national teams in Sweden, Canada, the USA, and Mexico, and is the chair of the International Paralympic Table Tennis Committee. He also sits on the executive committee of the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association.

The university does face its challenges with the departure of Coach Lillieroos. Host university to the upcoming 2006 National Intercollegiate Table Tennis Championships in April, the team will prepare for the tournament under the new direction of interim head coach Keith Evans. Teammate Jasna Reed has also moved into the role of assistant coach. Coach Lillieroos has agreed to return to the program for two weeks in April to oversee the championship.

"Spirit, invention and creativity often go away because of the changes in your life," reflects Christian, "but table tennis has brought me around the world. My kids have been the players on the team and had it not been for this opportunity, I would have gladly stayed with the program for four and a half years more."

Ads In This Issue

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertiser</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers</td>
<td>2-3,5,8,82-83,86-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddle Palace</td>
<td>14-15,47,48-49,58-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly</td>
<td>6-7,40-41,88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American TT</td>
<td>12-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Open Info</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newgy</td>
<td>44-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHS America</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of U.S. Table Tennis Vol. VI</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Table Tennis Club</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMDT Robots</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Evert U.S. Open Warm-up</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosika &amp; Lupulesku Coaching</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDTT Camps</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BumperNets</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Doping</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha TT</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Ping-Pong Diplomacy on View at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art

An exhibition at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, MO, takes a closer look at how two emerging artists use low-tech, common materials to create larger-than-life sculptural environments that fuse together architecture and landscape and playfully negotiate different aesthetics. Ping-Pong Diplomacy: Stephen Hendee & Phoebe Washburn, on view March 11-May 14 at the Kemper Museum, features two major site-specific installations by Stephen Hendee and Phoebe Washburn, and includes a ping-pong table designed in tandem by both artists located at the center of the gallery, where visitors can reflect on the exhibition's duality while playing a game or two.

Taking a historic 1971 table tennis tournament as its point of reference, Ping-Pong Diplomacy explores the idea of working out differences through play by bringing together two artists who follow similar rules to express divergent styles and concepts.


USATT League Watch
Sponsored by Paddle Palace and Stiga
www.usatt.org/league

By USATT League Director Larry Hodges
Below are the current stats on the USATT League, which now has leagues in 47 states and DC. The League started in September, 2003. Take a trip to www.usatt.org/league, explore the pages, and join - or start! - a league!

Active Leagues 161
Participants 4619
Matches 65,943

USATT League Watch

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Ulpiano Santo: 98 and Still Active & Competitive!

By Dean Johnson

On any Monday or Friday evening at the Tidewater Table Tennis Club in the Kempsville Recreation Center in Virginia Beach you’ll find Ulpiano Santo playing challenge matches. After a match or two, “Mr. Santo,” as he’s respectfully referred to at the club, will match wits with Celus Weeks, at checkers. Nothing unusual, except for the fact that Mr. Santo was 98 years young on April 3.

Not only has Mr. Santo been blessed with a long and fruitful life, but he has had a long and distinguished career in table tennis; he has won 11 U.S. National titles – three times in the over 70 event, three times in the over 75 and five times in the over 80. In every event he played, he was, in his words “always the oldest.” He played in the over 80s for 11 years. Since no event existed for players age 90 and over, he retired from active U.S. National play since, in his words, he “could no longer compete with the youngsters.” He still maintains a 1300+ rating.

In addition to playing U.S. National events, Mr. Santo competed in the U.S. Senior Olympics and in the World Senior Championships – in 1990 in Baltimore, where he and his partner won the over 80 doubles; 1992 in Dublin, Ireland where he won a silver medal in the over 80 singles and in 1994 in Melbourne, Australia where he and his partner won the consolations in the over 80 doubles.

Born in Leyte in the Philippines, Mr. Santo’s career in table tennis began during his service in the U.S. Navy, which he joined in 1929. For the most part, the game was a hobby for him and he only played while his ship was in port. Following his retirement from the Navy in 1956, he took up the sport in earnest and began competing in tournaments.

During his career, Mr. Santo met and competed against some of the legends of table tennis, such as Lazlo Bellak, Sol Schiff and Jimmy McClure.

When asked about the contribution table tennis has made to his longevity and good health he said, “Table tennis has been good for me, especially for my legs, arms, reflexes, hand-eye coordination and eye peripheral vision which is why I’m still able to drive my car at age 98.”

Mr. Santo lives in Chesapeake with his wife of 67 years, Francisca.

Wizards Halftime Exhibition

Cheng Yinghua and Jack Huang do an exhibition at halftime during a Washington Wizards home game on Jan. 31, 2006, in front of 15,000 spectators. Helping out were Alan Pemberton (who umpired and helped make arrangements), Charlene Liu and Changping Duan. Special thanks for helping out go to Ken Bradford, Meredith Fox, Tom Glick, North American Table Tennis, the NBA, and of course the Wizards - who defeated the Indiana Pacers that night, 84-79.
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CLASS OFF | SPEED 84 | CONTROL 59

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President's Report
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

As I reported a few years ago, in addition to providing the membership with regular updates, I am also dedicated to educating you about the significance and historical background of USATT's activities. That is why I also call each report part of the "association primer series." It is especially important to provide the background information because many of you are new to USATT.

USATT League Agreement

Earlier this year, I announced that this will be the year of the clubs. In January, USATT approved a 10-year league services agreement with North American Table Tennis. USATT and NATT are pleased that Stiga/Paddle Palace is actively engaged as a sponsor. As additional league details emerge, we will provide more extensive updates. I am also working on preparing additional initiatives for Board approval. All of these initiatives are dedicated to building up the infrastructure of our clubs for your enjoyment of our sport. We also want to continually grow our association so that new members will join and also have fun participating in competitive opportunities, experiencing health benefits, and making new friends.

U.S. Open Team Championships

In March, USATT held the U.S. Open Team Championships in cooperation with NATT. Historically the tournament was held over Thanksgiving weekend in Detroit. The tournament had always been a highlight of many clubs' annual activities because it was the only 5-star team event held under the aegis of USATT. Many clubs would hold trials to field their teams. After the first day of preliminary matches, teams were placed in one of multiple divisions with players of roughly their competition level.

Several years ago, the organizer of the event decided not to run it. There was a question about future rights to hold the tournament. At that time, USATT was beginning its relationship with NATT. NATT proposed that it would run a team tournament over the Thanksgiving weekend in Baltimore. The Board decided to rename the event and signed an agreement with NATT to run it as a 4-star tournament. Years later, when USATT signed a release with Bob Allshouse, who had also previously operated USATT's national training center, any questions about the naming rights dissolved. Because of the excellent success NATT had built up with their Thanksgiving weekend, USATT decided not to pursue reclaiming that weekend for the USOTC's. Instead, we sought an alternative weekend. After years of dormancy, the event was revived. I'm sure that the Board will consider a few options concerning the future of this event.

North American Table Tennis Union

USATT's executive director Doru Gheorghe and I both went to Reno for the USOTC's. We took the opportunity to meet with many people also attending the event. In particular, we welcomed the president and executive director of Canada, Bruce Burton and Tony Kiesenhoff. A main purpose of our meeting was to discuss the North American continental agreement with the ITTF. Currently the ITTF has a developmental program in which the ITTF funds continental development activities that will promote the game globally. Each continent's representative negotiates with the ITTF what its specific initiatives will be. NATTU's current representative is Bruce Burton. As such, he is a Vice President of the ITTF. On behalf of NATTU, Bruce Burton will sign the continental agreement with the ITTF in the near future. In Reno we all agreed that the North American Table Tennis Union should become a registered entity similar to the other five Continental associations (Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, and Latin America). ITTF President Adham Sharara agreed that this step should also be taken in order for the ITTF to formally convey its financial support to North America.

Community-Based Programs Representative

In Reno, some college students also wanted to hear about why I chose not to re-appoint Willy Leparulo to serve as USATT's Community-Based Programs Representative. As I explained to them, my role as USATT president is to act in USATT's best interests. I think that Willy has done a great job in his role as president within the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association. Regarding this USATT appointment to the Board, the current By-Laws state that it is the president's right to nominate a candidate for this position. In considering what is best for USATT, I decided to look for another person to serve in that position. In the end, the Board approved my nomination of Joseph Wells. Joseph is the Vice President of NCTTA and works as sales coordinator for Marriott International. I want to especially thank Christian Lillieroos, formerly of Texas Wesleyan University, for his assistance on this. USATT also wishes Christian all the best in his new career in China.

35th Anniversary of Ping Pong Diplomacy

The rest of this report, in fact, pertains to China. As our longer-term members know, table tennis plays a pivotal role in the modern relationship between our two countries. In 1971 China invited the U.S. team to visit China. In 1972, President Nixon traveled to China and the Chinese sent a team to tour the United States. In both countries, the two teams played friendship matches. The goodwill generated by the athletes, that in turn changed history, earned the moniker Ping Pong Diplomacy.

In many previous president's reports, I have alluded to the fact that I began playing table tennis shortly after Ping Pong Diplomacy. Now I will elaborate on that and explain its current relevancy.

Toward the end of last December, USATT received an invitation to return to China for the 35th anniversary of Ping Pong Diplomacy. The proposed trip was to take place toward the end of March. As I write, the trip has just ended. One of the participants of this year's tour was Tim Boggan. As usual, he took copious notes. We'll run his story in the next issue. So, what I'll share here is a kind of behind-the-scenes look at this event and its modern significance.

Zhuang Zedong gave me his firsthand account during this tour. He was a three-time world champion ('61, '63, and '65). He said that China had withdrawn from international competitions, but decided to send its team to the world championships in 1971. They were supposed to report back on their experiences. One day, a chance encounter changed everything. Glenn Cowan, one of the U.S. team members, got on a bus that happened to be carrying the Chinese athletes. As he boarded the bus, the door closed and the bus began moving. He looked up and saw them. He instantly realized that this bus was not the bus he'd meant to board. As he looked back at the door, it was already closed. With his back turned toward them momentarily, the back of his tracksuit revealed the letters: USA. Outside of the bus, many people,
China’s Zhuang Zedong and USA’s Glenn Cowan pose with the gift of a tapestry depicting China’s Huangshan Mountains. Their friendship helped spark Ping Pong Diplomacy in 1971. You might recognize the photo – it’s the cover photo of Tim Boggan’s History of U.S. Table Tennis, Vol. V, which covers the Ping Pong Diplomacy tours.

including the press, witnessed what had just happened. So, on the bus, with nowhere to go to but the next destination, Cowan had no option but to sit. Zhuang Zedong’s mind raced. He’d represented China for many years, always with the understanding that there should be no friendly contact, in fact, no association with Americans. But he also recalled that in 1970 Mao Tse-Tung had invited the American journalist Edgar Snow to appear publicly with him in Tiananmen Square and had made comments signaling possible future relations. He thought that it might be a good idea to make a friendly gesture toward the American. Zhuang decided to present Glenn Cowan with a tapestry depicting China’s Huangshan Mountains. Shortly afterwards, the bus arrived at its destination. Photographers and journalists, who were tipped off as to where the bus would arrive, awaited them. Zhuang Zedong and Glenn Cowan posed, showing the present. On the next day, photos ran in newspapers worldwide, questioning whether this demonstration of friendship between table tennis players symbolized a turn in Sino-American relations. One thing led to another, leading up to today’s modern reality.

There is also an interesting story relating to the tour’s sponsor, HongShanShu. Translated, the company name means redwood or sequoia. It was named after the tree that President Nixon planted in China in 1972. Sequoias live for hundreds of years and grow taller than any other tree. Liu Weijun acquired the company in 2001. A year ago, he learned that the company chose its name in commemoration of the friendship between the U.S. and China. He decided to offer Zhuang Zedong a position as a consultant so that he could further identify his brand with its historical roots. So, when he learned that 2006 would be the 35th anniversary of Ping Pong Diplomacy, he naturally pursued the sponsorship opportunity. As you’ll learn in the next magazine, Mr. Liu took excellent care of us and his generosity knew no limits.

It was a privilege for me to head the delegation. I also thank USATT’s staff who took pride in putting together trip logistics. The Chinese Table Tennis Association, HongShanShu and USATT worked together and all events during the tour were a great success.

The amazing thing for me was how I went from being a little girl, who knew nothing about Ping Pong Diplomacy, to learning about it. When I found out what it was and committed myself to the sport, I got to meet many of the American Ping Pong Diplomacy delegation. Over the years, acquaintances turned into friends. Friendships flourished into a focus on moving USATT forward. Moving USATT forward led to my election. My service as USATT president led to making friends with many of the Chinese Ping Pong Diplomacy members, including CTTA President Xu Yinheng and ATTU President Li Furong.

During our tour, we spoke not just about the past, but about the future as well. We are the guardians of the Ping Pong Diplomacy heritage. It is through us, our words, our actions and our commitment that the spirit of Ping Pong Diplomacy will live on. Let’s each take on the challenge of being someone who makes a difference in this world, being someone who bridges international friendships, and always carries on Ping Pong Diplomacy as a living legacy.
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The US Open Championship venue is the spacious Charlotte Convention Center located in the heart of Charlotte right across the street from the 4-star premier USATT Headquarters' Hotel, The Charlotte Hilton Center City. There are so many activities, upscale restaurants, varied shopping centers, golf links and popular places for you and the family to visit by foot, trolley or car; whether it is within Charlotte or outside of Charlotte at the nearby beaches, surrounding lakes or the lovely mountains.

See www.usatt.org webpage for more information about “101 Charlotte Things to Do.”

Hotel Reservations: To reserve room accommodations at The Charlotte Hilton Center City, call 1-800-445-8667 or 1-704-377-1500. Be sure and mention the US Open event code name-USATT 2006 US Open-to get the discount tournament rate of $89.00 plus 13.5% tax per night for single or double reservations. Room registration on line can be done at www.charlotte.hilton.com

Entries: Official USATT entries have been mailed out to members. On-line entries can be found at the www.usatt.org website. For both on-line entries and mailed entries, the deadline for entering the US Open Championships is, Thursday, May 25th. On-line entries must be entered by 12 midnight May 25th. Mailed entries must be postmarked no later than May 25th. Late entries will be accepted after May 25th through June 1, 2006. Both on-line and mailed entries will be charged a $ 75.00 late fee. After June 1, absolutely no entries will be accepted.
### Event Schedule

#### Championship Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Prize Money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men's Singles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>12PM</td>
<td>2800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Singles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>1800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Doubles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>2PM</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-21 Men's Singles</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>10AM</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-21 Women's Singles</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>12PM</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30 Men's Singles</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>8AM</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30 Women's Singles</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>6PM</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Bat Over 40 Singles</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>2PM</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Over 40 Singles</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>12PM</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Over 40 Singles</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man's Over 50 Singles</td>
<td>FRI</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Over 50 Singles</td>
<td>FRI</td>
<td>6PM</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's Over 60 Singles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>10:30AM</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Women's Over 60 Singles</td>
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<td>10:30AM</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 RR</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70 RR</td>
<td>THU</td>
<td>3PM</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 75 RR</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>12PM</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 80 RR</td>
<td>FRI</td>
<td>3PM</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40 Doubles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 Doubles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60 Doubles</td>
<td>FRI</td>
<td>11:15AM</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70 Doubles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Bat RR</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>9AM</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Bat Doubles</td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>9:45AM</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### U.S. Open Table Tennis Championships

**Charlotte, NC**

**July 5-8, 2006**

---

**Championship Events**

1. **Men's Singles**
   - **Date**: WED
   - **Time**: 12PM
   - **Prize Money**: 2800, 1500

2. **Women's Singles**
   - **Date**: WED
   - **Time**: 9AM
   - **Prize Money**: 1800, 1000

3. **Men's Doubles**
   - **Date**: WED
   - **Time**: 2PM
   - **Prize Money**: 600, 300

4. **U-21 Men's Singles**
   - **Date**: THU
   - **Time**: 10AM
   - **Prize Money**: 250, 100

5. **U-21 Women's Singles**
   - **Date**: THU
   - **Time**: 12PM
   - **Prize Money**: 250, 100

6. **Over 30 Men's Singles**
   - **Date**: THU
   - **Time**: 8AM
   - **Prize Money**: 300, 150

7. **Over 30 Women's Singles**
   - **Date**: THU
   - **Time**: 6PM
   - **Prize Money**: 200, 100

8. **Hard Bat Over 40 Singles**
   - **Date**: THU
   - **Time**: 2PM
   - **Prize Money**: 200, 100

9. **Men's Over 40 Singles**
   - **Date**: THU
   - **Time**: 12PM
   - **Prize Money**: 150, 75

10. **Women's Over 40 Singles**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 9AM
    - **Prize Money**: 150, 75

11. **Man's Over 50 Singles**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 9AM
    - **Prize Money**: 150, 75

12. **Women's Over 50 Singles**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 6PM
    - **Prize Money**: 150, 75

13. **Men's Over 60 Singles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 10:30AM
    - **Prize Money**: 100, 50

14. **Women's Over 60 Singles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 10:30AM
    - **Prize Money**: 100, 50

15. **Over 65 RR**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 9AM
    - **Prize Money**: A

16. **Over 70 RR**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 3PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

17. **Over 75 RR**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 12PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

18. **Over 80 RR**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 3PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

19. **Over 40 Doubles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 9AM
    - **Prize Money**: 150, 100

20. **Over 50 Doubles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 9AM
    - **Prize Money**: 150, 100

21. **Over 60 Doubles**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 11:15AM
    - **Prize Money**: 100, 50

22. **Over 70 Doubles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 9AM
    - **Prize Money**: 100, 50

23. **Hard Bat RR**
    - **Date**: SAT
    - **Time**: 9AM
    - **Prize Money**: 150, 100

24. **Hard Bat Doubles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 9:45AM
    - **Prize Money**: A

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**Junior Championship Events**

25. **Junior Boys Singles**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 11:15AM
    - **Prize Money**: A, A

26. **Junior Girls Singles**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 11:15AM
    - **Prize Money**: A, A

27. **Cadet Boys Singles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 6PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

28. **Cadet Girls Singles**
    - **Date**: WED
    - **Time**: 6PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

29. **Boys' 13 and Under Singles**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 12PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

30. **Girls' 13 and Under Singles**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 12PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

31. **Boys' 11 and Under Singles**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 3PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

32. **Girls' 11 and Under Singles**
    - **Date**: FRI
    - **Time**: 3PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

33. **Boys' 9 and Under Singles**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 3PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

34. **Girls' 9 and Under Singles**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 3PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

35. **Cadet Doubles**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 6PM
    - **Prize Money**: A

36. **13 and Under Doubles**
    - **Date**: THU
    - **Time**: 11:15AM
    - **Prize Money**: A
An Official’s View
By “Dr. Azmy”
Umpire Level Requirements

We are looking for umpires wanting to travel to foreign countries. Only International Umpires can be sent to umpire overseas. We do send National Umpires to umpire in Canada. USATT pays partial travel expenses for umpires sent to foreign tournaments. It is a great experience for those who go.

USATT has 34 active International Umpires. Of those 34, all but six are over 50 years old and 20 are over 60. We want to encourage younger umpires to step up and move up to the international level.

The steps are:

Club Umpire – Any USATT member can pay $10 and take the open book exam on the web or on paper. The exam is 50 true/false, multiple choice and playing situation questions.

Regional Umpire – A club umpire with a minimum of one year’s umpire experience including at least 25 high level matches of which at least five are doubles. The exam is 50 multiple choice and playing situation questions with a one-hour time limit. The exam fee is $15.

National Umpire – A regional umpire with a minimum of one year’s Regional Umpire experience, including at least 25 high level matches of which at least five are doubles. The exam is 50 questions with a one-hour time limit. The exam is given only at the U.S. Open and the U.S. Nationals.

International Umpire – Must be an active National Umpire for at least two years and be recommended by the Rules/Officials Committee.

More details on these exam levels are on the USATT website under the Rules tab.

Umpire Recertification – To ensure that umpires keep up with rules changes, all USATT umpires must recertify every three years beginning in 2006. The recertification exam is an open book exam that can be taken free on the web or for $5 on paper.

New Referee Requirements
In 2003 USATT began a certified referee program to provide a uniform standard for referees. The old standard required the referee to be a regional or higher umpire. Many of those umpires qualified by umpire rank have not had to answer any referee question on an exam.

Many tournaments did not have a regional or higher umpire available. The certified referee qualification was developed to allow any umpire to take the training and become certified as a referee. Beginning in 2007 all referees will have to have passed a referee exam.

The referee candidate pays a $15 fee and receives a current copy of the Tournament Guide and a referee CD. The CD contains several PowerPoint lessons on the duties of the referee. The CD also contains other useful items including the ITTF Laws and Regulations and the Tournament Guide which contains downloadable forms needed to run a tournament.

After studying the Tournament Guide and the Referee CD, the candidate to take the exam. The exam consists of 25 questions and a separate requirement to make a draw requirement.

If you would like to help improve the sport, consider becoming an umpire or referee.

Dear Editor,
Please, please give us a break. Must every issue have an article extolling the super talent of Scott Preiss or his super wonderful son? The article titles make one believe they are about someone else (e.g. Miles) but they always wind up primarily about the Preiss’s and always they are in the endless photos of themselves.

Jack Webb
San Francisco

The Editor Responds....

Dear Jack,
I think of Scott Preiss as sort of a “roving correspondent,” who sends in write-ups of his experiences as a full-time professional table tennis exhibitor (which he usually does with his son Austin, former #1 in Under 10 Boys in the U.S. and recently #3 in Under 12). He travels all over the U.S. (sometimes the world) and meets up and does exhibitions or TV shows with numerous “celebrities.” I’ve told him that if he does an exhibition that involves celebrities, especially if there’s a picture, to send it in. It adds spice to the magazine. If anyone else can do the same, well, send it in!

Larry Hodges
Editor, USA Table Tennis Magazine
"The Resurgent Years: 'going to the World's for the first time is...like a first romance, seeing "Space Odyssey," [or having]...a religious revelation.'"

BY TIM BOGGAN
USATT HISTORIAN

Intent at the Sarajevo World's:
L-R: Men's Coach Bong-Mo Lee, Men's Player Peter Pradit,
U.S. Team Captain Bob Kaminsky, U.S. Women's Coach Jack Howard,
USTTA President Tim Boggan and his wife Sally.

Also Available
(Covers the Ping-Pong Diplomacy Years)

Send check or money order for $33* per book, and send and make payable to:
Tim Boggan, 12 Lake Ave., Merrick, NY 11566.
Please allow three weeks for delivery.
*Includes shipping and handling

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<td></td>
<td>Vol. V</td>
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</table>
Club of the Month: The Ping Pong Posse
By Jason Sun

The USC Table Tennis club calls themselves the Ping Pong Posse ... and they have the shirts to prove it. This college club began in 2002 when senior theatre major and current actor Adam Bobrow and his friend, Angad Singh, decided that it was time that the University of Southern California have a place where table tennis enthusiasts of all levels can conglomorate and test their skills against one another. It was a huge hit and the club had over 400 people on its interest/contact list. Unfortunately, the school only had to offer two lild, worn Kettler tables with saggy nets and only a small carpeted area in which to play. After Bobrow’s graduation, freshman Jason Sun and Hugh Nguyen took over as presidents of the club.

Being the business majors that they were, Jason and Hugh took a business approach to building the club. After investing a few thousands of dollars into new tables and offering instruction to its members in lieu of a massive campus advertising and recruiting campaign, the club grew its membership base and started really taking off.

Hugh has since retired from a management position in the club, but under the leadership of Jason Sun and his current cabinet of officers (Jordan, Chloe, Connie, Dennis, Jaydi, Vega and Imran), the club now has collegiate men’s and women’s teams which are ranked second and sixth in the nation respectively. The club now has twelve Killerspin tables (the club/team sponsor). They have since moved out of the little carpeted area and into a full-sized gym. The new USC Ping Pong Posse league plays every Thursday with cash prizes for the winners.

The Ping Pong Posse is one of the hippest collegiate clubs in Southern California with a fun, welcoming environment and cool apparel for its members including “booty” shorts and “Ping Pong Princess” shirts for its female members. You’ll often see the posse bring 10, 15, 20 players to major tournaments, all sporting their USC Ping Pong Posse shirts and shorts. Are you part of the Posse? The Posse is open to the public and they have a website at www.pingpongposse.com. High school students who are avid players of competitive table tennis should email posse@usc.edu if they would like to be considered to be recruited to the school team, getting a boost for their college application to USC. Look for scholarships within the next five years!

Michigan Pair Wins $10,000 Beer Pong Championship
Two recent University of Michigan Graduates split the $10,000 grand prize at the World Series of Beer Pong, held in January near Las Vegas. Jason Cohen and Nick Velissaris beat out more than 160 competitors to win the “title.” Beer pong is played this way: players attempt to toss a ping-pong ball into cups that are partially filled with beer at the other end of the table. If the players succeed, their opponents are forced to drink the beer in the cup. Critics say the game encourages binge drinking, but Cohen and Velissaris say it’s not about irresponsible drinking, that it’s a way to have a good time with friends. Contributed by Francis Guidace; info from The Ann Arbor News, www.mlive.com/a/news.
Both the TW2700-06 and the TW2000-05 use Double Spin Technology to feed no spin, top spin, under spin, and side spin balls and has programmable spin control and ball ejection speed. These functions can not be performed by a single spin machine. There are 9 different feeding positions. By pressing the left or right buttons on the Control Panel you can easily control and select the ball's trajectory angle.

These two robots have 3 different modes for the user to choose from:
1) Regular-mode (fixed feeding position)
2) Auto-mode (feeds irregular, left and right)
3) Self-mode (programmed by user)

The machines have memory function and can record inputted programs and memory of last plays mode and order. A collection net is used to automatically gather back the balls into the robot’s feeding tray.

**TW2700-06 Robot**

$1,299

**Special Offer:**
Free Gross of Double Fish balls
Free shipping if ordered before June 2006

1. Open the buckles
2. Push the ball collecting net spreading over both sides.
3. After training, take in and fold back the ball collecting net in a reverse order of the original process, lock the buckles in a right way, and put it in any place suitable.

**TW2000-05 Robot**

$1,150

**Special Offer:**
Free Gross of Double Fish Balls
Free shipping if ordered before June 2006

1. Turn this control to adjust the curve of the ejecting ball
2. Turn left or right to adjust the exit angle and then tighten screw.

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USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2006
Interview with the USA National Team Coaches on Developing the USA National Team


What, in your opinion, is needed for the USA Team to someday compete with the best teams in the world?

USATT is doing a good job by funding the Cadet and Junior teams and making their progress a priority. The Cadet and Junior trials at Las Vegas have been a big step forward. The training, coaching and travel support that USATT provides has put us on the right track.

We need a National Training Center where all of the USATT’s camps can be held. This center should also be available year round for training for any U.S. Team Member. Every top country has a NTC – we need one as soon as possible.

Secondly, there needs to be more prize money in our tournaments and opportunities to make a living for the U.S.’s best. Players in Europe and Asia are full-time players who make a good income from the sport. In the U.S. we only have Gao Jun and Jasna Reed on the Women’s side and Mark Hazinski and Barney Reed on the Men’s. Some countries have 15-20 full-time professional players participating in leagues and the Pro Tour. It is almost impossible for part-time players to compete at the international level against these professionals.

Third, we need to focus on a tour for U.S. residents only. This is controversial as many believe that we need to invite these foreign players to our tournaments to help improve our level. The bottom line is our top players need to earn a respectable income so they can concentrate fully on training.

Given USATT’s limited resources, what do you think the priorities should be at this time so that the USA Team can someday become among the best in the world?

Traveling overseas to train in Europe or Asia is extremely expensive and considering our limited funds just won’t work. We need to put our time and resources into a National Training Center. Not just any center. Not just a training center. And to provide financial incentives for athletes in order to commit to year-round training.

For USA players, how would you compare overseas training in Asia (generally more intense training) versus Europe (generally more competitions such as leagues)?

The Asian system would be good for young players to develop their skills and master their techniques. After a certain age league matches and international competitions are necessary in order to gain match experience and improve mental strength. I would say that we should use a combination of the two systems and adjust it to our needs. We should consider the players’ needs, skills and also the system in which they live. The Chinese training system fits the Chinese system, with tough competition in order to become a member of their national team. School programs need to be adjusted according to the training program, not the other way around. The school system in Europe is flexible, and most of the high-level players can go to college and play table tennis. They can make a living playing table tennis due to the strong professional club structure.

Home schooling and a strong education system is offered in the U.S., but school programs are not as flexible as in Europe and Asia. Our players have to make a tough choice since the current table tennis situation in this country will not yet allow them to make a living.

For USA players, how would you compare overseas training in Asia (generally more intense training) versus Europe (generally more competitions such as leagues)?

They are both excellent options. If a player can find a team to play for then I would say Europe is better. Training hard and playing many tournaments or league matches is essential to improve your game. In Asia the training is more intense and there are many high-level practice partners. During my career I played in the German Bundesliga and also trained in Japan and both were beneficial in different ways.

Doru Gheorghe: U.S. Women’s Team Coach since 1998 (and USATT Executive Director since 2003), was a member of the Romanian National team from 1970-1983. He was 15-times Romanian National Champion, and participated in four World Championships and six European Championships. He was a professional player and coach in Romania, and General Secretary of Romanian Table Tennis Federation for seven years (1990-1997). He’s coached Romanian and USA teams at three Olympics and numerous Pan Am and World Championships.

What, in your opinion, is needed for the USA Team to someday compete with the best teams in the world? Given USATT’s limited resources, what do you think the priorities should be at this time so that the USA Team can someday become among the best in the world?

Provide opportunity, financial incentive and support for full-time training all year long under the supervision of qualified coaches while in preparation with the National team(s) and at clubs. For that we need to develop a good club structure, regional training centers and a National training center, and to provide financial incentives for athletes in order to commit to year-round training.

Given USATT’s limited resources, what do you think the priorities should be at this time so that the USA Team can someday become among the best in the world?

Direct our attention and limited resources only toward the best world class players, top junior and cadet players who want to commit to on table tennis and offer them the best training preparation.

For USA players, how would you compare overseas training in Asia (generally more intense training) versus Europe (generally more competitions such as leagues)?

The Asian system would be good for young players to develop their skills and master their techniques. After a certain age league matches and international competitions are necessary in order to gain match experience and improve mental strength. I would say that we should use a combination of the two systems and adjust it to our needs. We should consider the players’ needs, skills and also the system in which they live. The Chinese training system fits the Chinese system, with tough competition in order to become a member of their national team. School programs need to be adjusted according to the training program, not the other way around. The school system in Europe is flexible, and most of the high-level players can go to college and play table tennis. They can make a living playing table tennis due to the strong professional club structure.

Home schooling and a strong education system is offered in the U.S., but school programs are not as flexible as in Europe and Asia. Our players have to make a tough choice since the current table tennis situation in this country will not yet allow them to make a living.

Masaaki Tajima: U.S. Junior Boys’ Team Coach. He started coaching about 30 years ago out of necessity to recruit and retain new players for his club. He got more serious about coaching when the demand increased and new responsibilities came up. He gradually changed from a career in the hospitality industry to full-time coaching, and currently operates the Sunset Table Tennis Club in San Francisco which he founded in 1988.

What, in your opinion, is needed for the USA Team to someday compete with the best teams in the world? Given USATT’s limited resources, what do you think the priorities should be at this time so that the USA Team can someday become among the best in the world?

I’ll combine the first two questions since they are related. These questions have been asked many times, even before my time and the answers have been pretty much the same: grassroots, clubs, schools, leagues, marketing, get it on TV, good management, leadership, run it like a business, etc. But I believe it is more complex and difficult for us to get there because of the nature of our sport.
**THE CHRIS EVERT CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL**

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**THE SOUTH FLORIDA TABLE TENNIS**

**US OPEN WARM UP TOURNAMENT**

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---

**WHEN**

Saturday and Sunday July 1 + 2, 2006

**WHERE**

Coral Springs Gymnasium, 2501 Coral Springs Dr. Coral Sps. FL 33071

**DEADLINE**

Entries must be received by Saturday June 19th, 2006, after deadline entry by availability.

**COMMITTEE**

Marty Prager Director, Terese Terranova IU/Referee, Carolyn Huang, Hong Chow, Dai Mahanaj, Carlos Zeller

**EQUIPMENT**

Stiga, Killerspin + SpinTech tables + nets, Nittaku 3* orange balls, wood gym floor

**RULES**

All USATT rules and dress code will apply. RR’s 3 of 5, semi + final of event #1 4 of 7. Players must be USATT/ITTF members or 1x pass (adult $40/juniors $20/1x pass $10). Unrated players can’t advance from RR rating events. All foreign ratings over 8 mo. old subject to revision. Director may modify, seed out or cancel event.

**POLICIES/INFO**

Refunds will be given 1 week prior to tournament. No show no refunds. Phone entries will be put on a list and entered upon availability. Please check in at least ½ hr. before event starts.

**Host hotel is the La Quinta Coral Springs. Info for hotel and the entry listed on sftto.org**

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**# EVENT**

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Some events may carry over to Sunday. *Event #1 must be over 1900 or discretion of director.

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO SO. FL TABLE TENNIS ORG., 2681 E. Marina Dr., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312**

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Please register me in the following events circled below

- **Doubles Partners:** 3600

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**

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**USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2006**
Given USATT's limited resources, what do you think the priorities should be at this time so that the USA Team can someday become among the best in the world?

We should devote our limited resources to developing our top juniors with many training camps and competitions.

For USA players, how would you compare overseas training in Asia (generally more intense training) versus Europe (generally more competitions such as leagues)?

The training in Asia is definitely more intense and there are many more playing styles to practice with and compete against. I believe the training in China is the best for the cost. Many of the top world players have trained in China, including Waldner, Schlager, Chuan, etc.

* * * * *

Sean O'Neil: USA Cadet Boys' Team Coach. He also coaches the U.S. Disabled Team internationally. A former national and Olympic team member and five-time USA Men's Singles Champion, he started his playing career in 1975. Currently living in Portland, OR, Sean was named the 2005 USATT & NCTTA Coach of the Year.

What, in your opinion, is needed for the USA Team to someday compete with the best teams in the world?

First and foremost, the USA Team needs to believe they can compete and be the best. It all starts with the belief that beating the best is indeed possible. I think as national team coaches, we need to do a better job at creating this winning mindset among our players in the international arena.

When I played on the U.S. Team with Danny, Eric, Jimmy and Hank, we always believed we had a chance to beat anyone we played. [Mikael Andersson of the ITTF even wrote an article on this for the U.S. Open program.]

At the 1993 Worlds when we faced China in the first division, we were the only team that fielded our strongest team against them in the prelims. Danny upset Zhang Lei, and I lost to Liu Guoliang in three. Jimmy lost to Wang Hao (chopper) deuce in the third and played close with Liu. Our strong belief in ourselves outweighed our lack of international Pro Tour experience.

I try to do the same with the USA Disabled Team and I believe some of our results are a direct result in believing we are good enough to compete even though our clubs or training is far below the world standard. Unfortunately, I don’t see this mental approach in preparation or tournament play today from anyone other than Tawny and Gao. Clearly we must train as hard as our European and Asian counterparts as being among the best teams requires a full commitment from the players, coaches and association. Doru Gheorghe has put together a sound high performance plan as the USATT ED which should be supported and followed. The plan is there, now we just need to execute it.

* * * * *

Given USATT's limited resources, what do you think the priorities should be at this time so that the USA Team can someday become among the best in the world?

I believe relying solely on USATT support will never allow the USA Team to be among the best in the world.

However, if I added up all the money spent by the Boggans, Seemillers, Gees, Butlers, Reeds, and other team members' families over the years, one would see that the total funding has exceeded millions of dollars.

My family spent close to $10,000 a year during my early development and I know many families that are making a similar commitment today. So I don't believe lack of money can be used as an excuse.

Coaches like Grace Lin, Lily Yip, Richard McAfee, Wei Wong, Attila Malek, Bill Lui, Dennis Davis, Mark Nordby, Cheng Yinghua, etc.

What, in your opinion, is needed for the USA Team to someday compete with the best teams in the world?

We need to practice and compete with the best on a regular basis.

* * * * *

Lily Yip, U.S. Junior Girls' Team Coach.

She is a many-time and current member of the U.S. National Team and a member of the 1992 & 1996 U.S. Olympic Team. She's won three gold medals at the Pan Am Games for doubles and teams, and three times won the silver medal for singles. She's been U.S. Women's Doubles Champion four times, and made the final of U.S. Women's Singles four times.

What, in your opinion, is needed for the USA Team to someday compete with the best teams in the world?

We need to practice and compete with the best on a regular basis.

* * * * *
Jon Bosika and Ilia Lupulesku join forces again to bring you

WORLD CLASS SUMMER TABLE TENNIS CAMPS

at DAVISON ATHLETIC CLUB

Jon Bosika
- 1996 US Women's Olympic Team Coach
- Former Yugoslavian Junior National Team Coach
- Long-time coach of Ilia Lupulesku, who played on Jon's team "Unirea" in Yugoslavia, the most accomplished table tennis team in the country's history
- In his 38-year career, Jon has coached players such as Zoran Primorac, Alexandar Karakasevic, Slobodan Grujic, Eric Owens, Barney Reed, Jasna Reed and Lily Yip

Ilia "Lupi" Lupulesku
- 1988 Olympic Silver Medalist, Men's Doubles
- 2002, 2003 and 2005 USA Men's Singles Champion
- 1998 European Mixed Doubles Champion, Men's Doubles Finalist
- 1991 World Team Championship Silver Medalist
- 1990 European Men's Doubles Champion, 3-time Runner-up
- 1987 World Championships Men's Doubles Finalist, Team Semifinalist
- Two-time European Mixed Doubles Champion, 2-time Runner-up

Location
Davison Athletic Club (DAC), Davison, MI

Equipment
Butterfly tables, wood floor, 3-star Double Happiness balls from

Dates
Session 1 June 14 - June 18, 2006
Session 2 August 16 - August 20, 2006

Daily schedule
10 am - 1pm and 3pm - 6pm

Participants
Players of all levels are welcome.
Only the first 24 players are guaranteed spots.
A minimum of 16 participants are required per session.

Cost
$400 per session, $700 for both sessions

Goals
Learning & perfection of technique, strategy, tactics

Practice partners
Several players rated 2000+ and Lupi, of course!

Registration deadline
Session 1 (June 5), Session 2 (August 7)

Hotel
Comfort Inn (810) 658-2700

Checks payable to
Davison Athletic Club (DAC)
Attn: World Class Table Tennis Camps
G-2140 Fairway Dr.
Davison, MI 48423

Questions
Call Jon Bosika at (810) 658-8153 or
DAC General Manager Randy Minto at (810) 653-9602
regarding golf and meal discounts

World class treatment:
- FREE video recording for each player to take home
- FREE camp T-shirt
- FREE pool and hot tub access
- FREE group exercise classes
- FREE refreshments during practice
- FREE fitness area access
- FREE entry in end-of-camp tournament with prizes
- special discount to those who wish to golf during the duration of the camp
- special discount to those who wish to have breakfast, lunch and dinner at DAC

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Huang Tong Sheng, Mitch Seidenfeld and many others have helped develop our players at the local level to position them to make our national teams at little or no cost to USATT.

So I think the question needs to be asked in a different way. “How can USATT better assist our future national team members to be competitive internationally?” The big answer in my mind is with better and stronger coaching.

As I said, we have a number of quality coaches across the country doing a fine job locally, but I haven’t seen any coordination to the degree I see in Europe or Asia. Maybe it is because our country is so big, but without a coordinated coaching program to teach our coaches and players, we will have to be happy with being ranked as a second or third tier country.

I think Danny Seemiller and John Allen have done fine educating coaches at USATT coaching seminars with the limited funds they have been given, but this should be a major priority of the association if we care to see our international results improve.

Also our top players have to remember that USATT can’t shoulder all the weight, our best and older players need to better transition into coaching to share their knowledge of the game to stay heavily involved. Creating junior programs, running group training sessions and being at the tournament for their players can be more profitable than making the quarters or semis and playing when you reach the senior ranks.

From my experience getting 50,000 more players will not increase the likelihood of an Olympic medal unless each of those players gets quality coaching prior to their 10th birthday. If the USATT wants to compete at the highest level we must understand that coaching needs to be the #1 priority of the association. Our coaches need to communicate more often, share the same international vision, and create a higher level of excellence. USATT can help facilitate these goals and provide incentives and more programs for coaches at all levels.

The one element I see in all Olympic and Paraolympic sports that are doing well in America is a strong coaching plan.

For USA players, how would you compare overseas training in Asia (generally more intense training) versus Europe (generally more competitions such as leagues)?

To be competitive in the world you need both. Every world-class player I know has trained in both Europe and Asia during their early development. Chinese coaches do focus more on technique while European coaches focus more on tactics. These two strategies complement each other nicely, but practiced alone will not create a complete player. Since most European clubs take the summer off, it makes sense for our players to train in China in the summer and try to find a way to play some in Europe during their heavy tournament season.

One other option which the Bay area is doing is to invite foreign players to their clubs to allow their players to stay at home and get quality training during the school year. I am aware of many Swedish clubs that would love to send their junior players to the U.S. in the summer as part of an exchange program to also play in the U.S. Open.

Emilia Gheorghe, U.S. Cadet Girls’ Team Coach. For over 13 years she was a member of Romanian National Team. She was the 1993 European Top Twelve Champion and finished second in 1995. She was on the Romanian team that won the gold medal at 1992 European Championships and third place at 1995 World Team Championships. She has played in two Olympic Games and finished fifth in 1992 in Women’s Singles. She was the 1990 & 1992 World Collegiate Women’s Singles Champion. She won the silver medal at the World Team Cup in Atlanta in 1995 where she was named the Women’s MVP.

What, in your opinion, is needed for the USA Team to someday compete with the best teams in the world?

Year-long training preparation, with training camps and participation in international competition, along with proper coaching and planning. Clubs are an important factor in developing our grassroots and providing proper preparation for athletes when they are not in training/competitions with National teams. Clubs are the base of our athlete development and an important factor in building our structure/system.

Given USATT’s limited resources, what do you think the priorities should be at this time so that the USA Team can someday become among the best in the world?

When sending teams to international tournaments we should minimize the number of players funded by USATT and maximize the number of days spent in training camps. This will open the door to greater competition among the players, will push the players to practice harder and provide the top players with more funded tournaments and training camps.

For USA players, how would you compare overseas training in Asia (generally more intense training) versus Europe (generally more competitions such as leagues)?

For U.S. junior players (with some exceptions) and younger ones, intensive training is first priority in my opinion. If you can have the competition too, then that’s the best solution. But leagues without proper training will not help in developing world-class players.

They Said It...
By Larry Hodges

“1 was a table-tennis champion on the club circuit in Denmark. I beat Johnny Depp once when he was dating Kate Moss, just hanging around one of those Ping-Pong tables they have in every hotel in L.A. I swear, when people aren’t going to auditions in L.A., they’re all playing Ping-Pong.” -Model Helena Christensen, Jan. 23-30 issue of New York Magazine, page 17, in answer to the question, “At which Olympic sport would you be most adept?” Submitted by Harry L. Frazer.

“We will not go to Kuwait and Qatar, that is certain, we are not prepared to put the health of our players at risk.” -Asker Beckmann, chairman of Danish Table Tennis Union, of the Kuwait and Qatar ITTF Pro Tour events. This was a result of the violent episodes in the Middle East following the recent publication of cartoons in a Danish newspaper depicting the Prophet Mohammed. From ITTF News.

“We’ll be happy to volley back with more good reasons why you’ll get great results from Xerox color.” -Ad for Xerox in the March issue of Time Magazine. It included large colorful drawings of two ping-pong paddles and five ping-pong balls. Contributed by L.M. Sandovale.

“Going home for the holidays? Tell your parents to set up your old Ping-Pong table. Turns out that playing table tennis improves brain function. ‘Ping-Pong is aerobic. It promotes healthy brain blood flow and stimulates the cerebellum and the thought centers in the frontal lobes,’ says Daniel G. Amen, M.D., a clinical neuroscientist and author of Making a Good Brain Great.” -From November 2005 Fitness Magazine, page 83.

“Whoever scored 10 first, lost!” -Eric Owens at the Cary Cup Championships of his match with Barney J. Reed, where whoever reached 10 first (even 10-8 or 10-7) kept losing. Submitted by Larry Thoman.
All Levels Welcome!

**TRAINING CAMP DATES:**

**JUNE 19-23**
**JULY 10-14**
**AUGUST 7-11**

**DAILY SCHEDULE**

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

**COACH CHENG YINGHUA**

- 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 16 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**

(August Camp Only)
- 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**

Name: Phone: Age/DOB: Rating:

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2005 Hall of Fame Inductee: 
JOHN TANNEHILL 
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

John Tannehill (L) is presented his Hall of Fame plaque by Dick Evans.

Dick Evans, co-manager of the Columbus, Ohio Club during the 1960’s, tells us how, even before John Tannehill was a teenager, his father, Chet, publisher/editor of a newspaper for the Gallipolis/Pomeroy communities along the Ohio river, had started bringing him to Columbus to play. After a time, however, since home was Middletown, Ohio near the West Virginia border, 100 miles away, Chet “would leave John to spend the weekend in the home of one of our club members, usually John’s father’s.” There young Tannehill not only improved his table tennis—but by 1965 he’d win the U.S. Open Boys U-13 from Glenn Cowan—but his chess with Spencer and Dick Miles’ friend Freddie Borges.

During the ‘66-’67 season, John was U.S. #1 in Boys U-15 and U.S. #2 behind Cowan in Boys U-17. Then, only 15 years old, playing at the U.S. Open Team Championships (USOTC’s), he had a 17-3 record, was named the tournament’s outstanding male player, and for 1967 was ranked #7 among U.S. men.

In 1968 Ichiro Ogimura came to North America, and at the Toronto Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) tournament John was pleased to have had his picture taken with this great Japanese player/coach and the reigning U.S. #1, D-J Lee. Motivated, John, back home in Middletown with no weekday club to practice at, adopted the following two-hours-a-day training program Ogi had given him:

“[1] Jog half a mile; run 220 yards as fast as you can, then jog 220 yards (repeat 4 times); warm down with a quarter of a mile…[2] go home, serve into [practice] board and whack back 200 made forehands; [then] shadow-train—that is, anticipate opponent’s table placements by moving fast to imaginary numbered positions on your side of the table (repeat seven-second movements forty times)…[3] swing backhands and forehands hard as you can—sixty times a half minute (repeat 2-3 times), finish off with 100 sit-ups.”

At the 1968 USOTC’s, one of Ohio’s important ties has John playing former Thai Champion, Surasak Koakiettaveechai, who’d beaten him six months earlier for the National Junior Championship. Thanks to his stepped-up training, John ekes out a win over Surasak in three deuce games. Unfeated Ohio then goes on to down undefeated California—by a good kill is, “Loop! Cock-up! Wham!” But an ardent fan of Haslam’s expression in Jamaica for a good loop that’s returned high and is followed by a good kill is, “Loop! Cock-up! Wham!” But an ardent fan of Haslam’s was yelling, “Loop! Cock up! Wham! Wham! Wham!” In fact, both players were whammin’ like crazy. Until in the 5th, when Les breaks open the game and by “sheer power” finally subdues John.

In Columbus at the Sweepstakes Tournament, Ohio Closed Champ Rich Farrell has John down match point. But the final bullet goes wide, and John, winning the next two points, is alive and well, and, with a young gunfighter’s already old reputation, is far game again for the next challenger.

And speaking of reputations and games there at the Columbus Club, Dick Evans clues us in on a local hippie pastime called “Strip Ping-Pong”—played after hours with the draperies closed and the front door locked. It was a game for the boys,” Dick said, “although there was one of our club ‘mascots’ who liked to join in because not only did she like just about any excuse to take her own clothes of, she liked seeing this particular John in the nude.”

At the 1970 CNE final, John rallies from down 2-0 to force D-J into the 5th and D-J’s wife Linda into an “I have to leave the hall, can’t watch,” anxiety attack.

Ohio wins the 1970 USOTC’s—but Buki’s losing 19-in-the-3rd struggle with Tannehill prompts Evans to pen a poem honoring Bernie with an Homeric allusion.

This strong play ensures John’s position on the 1969 U.S. World Team. In the Swaythling Cup play at Munich, John 5-5 holds his own. But at the English Junior Open that follows he plays this Swedish guy—and, after being up 18-14 in the 1st, and 17-15 in the 2nd, loses two straight. This Swedish guy John had down both games is Stefan Bengtsson, soon to be World Champion.

The May, ’69 San Francisco National’s saw Tannehill defeat Cowan and 4-time U.S. Champ Erwin Klein. But in the final John couldn’t contest against D-J. Pairled with Dell Sweeris, John also came runner-up in Doubles—to Lee and Cowan.

At their ’69 summer meeting, USTTA President Graham Steenhouven’s E.C. valued John so highly that they showed an 8-minute, 16mm film from Associated Ideas featuring him—and promptly bought two copies for $785. But, oh, oh, a certain tournament director feels John’s “gone a bit mad” and that now, “at 17, his head is a bit too big.” And curiously too.

Just as his rival Cowan’s looking a little different these days, so has Tannehill changed. Asked why he, like Sweeris, had switched to pimpled sponge, John said, “Because it’s more fun! You understand! More fun! I can feel the ball.”

By Dec. of 1969, John arrives at the Grand Rapids Central Open with his 8-pound Orbiton dumbbell. All week, he said, he’d been swinging that dumbbell as much as 50 times a day to develop his forehand. And, like some determined bullet-banded, grenade-carrying revolutionist converging on that Calvin College Fieldhouse, he carried, too, a Ton-a-matic ten-pound black belt (“I do all my exercises wearing this,” he said). Then, against Chicago’s Jim Davey, he mounts an attack, still wearing his heavy black belt. Fifteen straight games in the course of losing this match, John with dedicated industry and sobriety practices—and 15 straight games relentlessly fail to score with—his 3rd-ball attack.

But he and D-J do win the Doubles—in large part because John plays exceptionally well. “I couldn’t ever let D-J down,” he says. “He’s such a winner.”

At the 1970 U.S. Open, Tannehill is again beaten by Lee. Were there no South Korean Champion D-J Lee—John (once? twice?) would be the U.S. Champion.

That summer, John turns up in Kingston, Jamaica for a celebrated match with Jamaican icon Orville “Les” Haslam who at this time, based in London, was among the Top 10 players in England. A night crowd of thousands came to cheer their 6’3” 210-pound hero. As the fans were on their feet screaming, John kept thinking. “This Haslam hits the ball and spins backhands and forehands hard as you can—sixty times a half minute (repeat 2-3 times), finish off with 100 sit-ups.”
The amateur umpire calls the score wrong...a 2-point swing in Bukiet's favor. Bernie isn't waiting, serves. John catches the ball, wants to make a correction. Fault! The umpire awards another point to Bukiet. Bernie, in his "Survival of the Fittest" way, hurries to serve again. John doesn't understand what's happening. He can't concentrate. No, he can't have another umpire. Yes, he can have another umpire—she will keep the tally on paper for the first umpire who will call the score. And now 5-10 seconds go by before each service while the first umpire looks at the second umpire's tally. Yes, alright, all's correct. John is down 2-1 and 19-13 in the 4th. He wins 5 straight—then again has words with the umpire and, his concentration broken, loses, and comes off the table sobbing.

Like any changing teenager coming into manhood, John has issues. He's cut off his long hair, looks monkish. "Am I into meditation?" he responds, repeating my question, trying to ready himself to answer it. "No. My religion is probably...Life—whatever that is." John is thinking of making a transfer—will maybe leave the U. of Cincinnati, the robot in his dorm, and go to Ohio State where they're more liberal. He complains that where he's at "there's no creative schooling....Like every teacher I don't want to be responsible for you—that's what they were saying."

"My speech teacher said, 'We have to stick to the schedule.' She interjected Couan. "You escape into another reality." said Tannehill. "But is it better than this one?"

Then John went on to say, Mao's the adventure here. Mao's the drug here."

Of course there is also nicotine. Friendship first, competition second. "Here, try one of these cigarettes, John," say some smiling Chinese. "You'll like it."

Naturally we all went to the Great Wall, where Time took our picture, and Howard, Resek, and then Tannehill got sick—and, no, John, recuperating in a hospital room, didn't want to stay here in China after all; he'd go back to the U.S. with the Team. He'd been a fool to think he could know much about China after only a few days.

Later, when the Chinese came to the U.S. through Detroit, John was there too. He'd arrived at the airport in his familiar Washington overalls, accompanied by two unknown Chinese friends while the rest of the Team was in uniform. One of these mysterious friends carried a strange box out there to the welcoming line with John. Finally one of the security agents turned up his hearing aid and discovered him. "Hey, you, who are you, and what's in the box?" Turns out it's a pair of overalls, which John wanted to present to the Chinese, which wasn't so out of line, was it? But did it matter? Goodbye box. Goodbye Chinese friends.

One of the Chinese interpreters wanted to know from John if the Soviet Union was like America. "Yes," said John, "in both countries the workers are exploited. They're working for a capitalistic motive—for more and more money. The Soviets are heading more and more in our direction. Most of the youths there are taking drugs to try and escape everyone's greed and selfishness and to gain a sense of adventure that isn't provided by the society."

"Drugs help me think," interjected Couan. "John attacks me for drugs. You have a million crutches, John. Everybody has crutches."

Then Tannehill began talking about how drugs provided the dreams for youth. "Glenn needs dreams," he said. "Because he's a product of a society where the dreams are taken away."

"I do escape in drugs," said Glenn. "I choose to because they give me a world that fits my needs."

"You escape into another reality," said Tannehill. "But is it better than this one?"

After the Chinese left, John's roommates were there. "You can't stay here much longer," they told him. "There are three dorms you have to go through, and you'll be in the dorm."

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And, soon, goodbye Tannehill. He and Management—"Ping-Pong Diplomacy" in the person of USTTA President Steenhoven—weren't on the same Team page, weren't even in the same book. "Responsibility to Graham," said John, "means control, domination—I hate the way Graham uses the word 'Responsibility.' I've decided to be political and suffer the consequences. Not being political, it's like not having any mind."

How long John would stay in the Game wasn't clear given two introspective, controversial articles he wrote for Topics. In "The Coward in Ping-Pong," he confronts the "paranoid attacking player" who "can dream of nothing besides ping-pong." This perfectionist has a "lifeless life," for his table tennis play has a "lifeless aura." 

"Paranoid attacking player" who "can dream of nothing besides ping-pong." This perfectionist has a "lifeless life," for his table tennis play has a "lifeless aura." Enough to make you quit, was it? Sort of. Ten years ago, one of these warriors entered the Hall. Now it's the other's long overdue turn. John Tannehill—over Seemiller.

John married Arlene in 1975, and in 1976 they had a daughter Clare. Followed by a son Soren, both of whom are with him as he's being honored tonight. From the mid-'70's on, John had been at least semi-retired. Still, before the old millennium was up, the two warriors would go it again—with John for sure playing for some moral suffering. He turns up at the 1971 U.S. Open, he opens strongly, knocking out Resek and ex-Korean National Champ Joong Gil Park. Then, with Bong Mo Lee giving him emotional strength, making him feel he can't lose, he goes on to meet D-J in the semi's.

John's down 1-0 but up 15-13 in the 2nd when, according to John, D-J picks up the ball and throws it on the rise into his racket gives John a super illegal serve. Then he starts with the same serve again. This time umpire Bill Scheltema warns him...Lee goes for his towel...John is livid at the match. So if he doesn't think he can....

At the Eastern's, John wins the Mixed with Olgima-trained Olga Softesb. But loses in the Men's to Peter Pradit. "I don't think I can ever beat Lee. Or maybe Pradit," John says after the match. So if he doesn't think he can....

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John Tannehill had words with Steenhoven in Detroit and been sent packing, maybe he didn't really want to be on another U.S. Team? At the Tryouts for the 1973 U.S. World Team, after you'd thought of John as U.S. #2 for the last 4 seasons, he posted an unbelievable 6 and 8 record. But he did want to beat D-J. And finally did—28-26 in the 3rd. And yet...O.K., he had a blister, but, m'god, 8 losses! Enough to make you quit, was it? Sort of. He went to the University of Maine, where for 6 months he attended Bert Jacobs' classes and studied and wrote papers. Then made up his mind to come back to table tennis and start afresh. Joe Newgarden made it possible for him to again train in Miami, and Marv and Caron Leff invited him into their home and gave him moral support.

John, a war hero, one of these warriors entered the Hall. Now it's the other's long overdue time to join him. Ladies and Gentlemen, a man who we know chooses his path with heart, John Tannehill.
The USATT Disabled Committee

By Jennifer Johnson

Table Tennis is clearly the most non-discriminatory sport on the Olympic and Paralympic programs. It doesn’t matter if you are tall like Vladimir Samsonov or short like Deng Yaping. It doesn’t matter if you are a veteran like George Hendry or a youngster like Ariel Hsing. Most importantly in my case, it doesn’t matter if you are as agile as Wang Liqin or play more stationary in a wheelchair like I do. Table Tennis is everyone’s game!

The goal of the committee I co-chair with Sharon Brooks is to help serve the disabled table tennis community in the United States. Our committee helps assist with disabled standing and wheelchair tournament events, classification of players, outreach coaching programs, and growing the base of disabled table tennis players at home.

While we focus more on grassroots the USOC’s Paralympic Division helps with our National and Elite level athletes with coaching and international team preparation. The USOC’s Paralympic Lead Coach is Sean O’Neill (sean@ping-pong.com) If you are interested in competing for the U.S. Team, he can help answer questions dealing with USOC support and training. He has compiled quite an extensive video library of international players and is happy to share it with any players or coaches wanting to see how strong the international field is.

This past December in Las Vegas, USATT hosted an IPTTC sanctioned event during the Nationals. This gave many USATT members a first-hand chance to see some of the best disabled players in the world and to cheer for some of our stars like Norm Bass, Mitch Seidenfeld, Dawn Bergason and Ed Levy. I want to thank my staff and especially Doru Gheorghe for all his work on the event. Also Larry Hodges provided great coverage in the program for the event. We also had four new players (Darwin Holmes, Pat McDonald, Dana Liesegang and Tricia Sapp) from the U.S. Military Paralympic Outreach Program in addition to a number of new old faces to the sport. We are always striving to add more juniors and women to our teams so if you know some candidates let us know!

Due to the limited number of disabled players in the U.S. we strongly encourage all of our wheelchair and standing disabled players to join local USATT clubs and to participate in the programs they offer. We are starting to work with the USATT coaching committee to add a disabled component into their program. Playing able body players might seem like an uphill battle if you are disabled, but you will find your level will improve much quicker when you are pushed beyond your preconceived limits. And don’t forget the new ITTF and USATT rules which make returning serve a little easier if you are in a wheelchair!

I would like to make a general appeal to any families that have young children that go to the U.S. Open or Nationals. We want your kids! Actually we could help might seem like an uphill battle if you are disabled, but you work with the USATT coaching committee to add a disabled component into their program. Playing able body players might seem like an uphill battle if you are disabled, but you will find your level will improve much quicker when you are pushed beyond your preconceived limits. And don’t forget the new ITTF and USATT rules which make returning serve a little easier if you are in a wheelchair!
“Spin City” – The 2005 U.S. Paralympic Table Tennis Championships

Las Vegas, NV • Dec. 14-17, 2006 • By Danielle Brooks

“Sin City” became “Spin City” December 13-18, 2005 at the USA Paralympic Table Tennis Championships in Las Vegas, Nevada. The annual competition – typically a closed (to foreigners) event for able-bodied and disabled players – incorporated an international “flair” for the first time, boasting disabled players from 26 countries across the globe. In all, 130 players competed in wheelchair (classes 1-5) and standing events (classes 6-10). This was the last international tournament for the year 2005 and many of the participants were trying to get more ranking points in order to qualify for the 2006 World Championships to be held in Montreux, Switzerland, Sept. 22-Oct. 2.

The USA team was comprised of many newcomers to the international scene coupled with a handful of celebrated veterans. Darwin Holmes, Dana Liesegang, Pat McDonald, and Patricia Sapp, all military veterans, were extremely enthusiastic about competing in their first international contest. Though they were relative novices to the sport, no one felt intimidated by the well-seasoned international players. Yet the international competitors were not the only ones providing the “spice.” Experienced American players, including former Paralympians Mitch Seidenfeld, Tahl Leibovitz and Andre Scott displayed the skill and dexterity that has earned them their world-renowned reputations. Other table tennis veterans, including Norman Bass, Robert Bowlander and Dave Szymek, also added to the U.S. team’s medal count.

With the influx of the international players, even the strongest American players were faced with stiff competition. The women’s events, both standing and wheelchair, were dominated by the foreign competitors. Great Britain, France, Japan and Taipei all came away with multiple medals. Catherine Milton and team partner Jane Campbell of Great Britain both won medals in their respective classes and in the team event. The same went for Stephanie Mariage and Florence Gossiaux of France. Satoko Fujiwara of Japan came away with two Gold medals, as did Min Hsiu Liao and Shu Chin Hsiao of Taipei. Veteran Games newcomer, Patricia Sapp, made her debut successful by clinching the Bronze medal in the Class 4 singles event.

The Men’s Wheelchair competition saw several surprising victories and upsets. A strong Korean team earned nine medals in the tournament, a number only matched by the equally talented French team. Kyoung Sik Choi of Korea captured the Gold in both the Class 4 Singles and Team events, as well as securing the Bronze in the men’s Wheelchair Open. Christophe Durand of France won two Silver medals, both in his class and in the Open, and was able to capture the Gold in the Men’s team event for Class 5. Fierce competition between well-matched players demonstrated the sport at its highest level.

The men’s U.S. team performed brilliantly in the standing events, led by the suddenly understated Tahl Leibovitz. Tahl proved to be the powerhouse of the tournament, easily triumphing over Dragan Rakic of Croatia and Ronal Vijeverberg of the Netherlands to win the Men’s Open Standing event and Class 9 singles. Additionally, Leibovitz and his partner, former Paralympian Gold Medalist Mitch Seidenfeld, captured a bronze in the Men’s Standing Team event for Classes 9 and 10. Other American notables include former major league baseball pitcher and AFL football player Norman Bass, who clinched the Silver medal in Class 7 singles.

In the Men’s Team events, Team USA was not highly visible, taking only one team medal, Bronze in Class 9/10 Teams by Seidenfeld and Leibovitz. In overall Team event wins, Team France, including a Class 5 Gold Medal team of Christophe Durand and Japan’s Toshihiko Oka, came away with 3½ Team awards: the previously mentioned ½ of a team in Class 5, a Class 1-2 bronze medal team of Nennella and Boury, a Class 4 Silver team of Martin and Thomas, and a Class 8 Gold medal team of Abbadie and Rozier. There were some long-time Paralympic, Far East and South Pacific, and European champions evident among the medaling teams. Austrians Rudi Hajek and Hans Ruep won their customary gold in Class 1-2, beating the Slovakian team which featured the World top-ranked Class 2 player, Jan Riapos. Italy’s highly ranked Julius Lamphacker led his country’s Class 3 Men’s team to the Gold – defeating strong teams from Korea and Japan. Class 6-7 Men’s team was an exciting match-up of European champions, with Denmark’s Michael Jensen and Peter Rosenmeier besting teams from Great Britain and Sweden. The Women’s wheelchair team events were divided up between teams from Europe and Asia. In Class 1-3 teams, Team France took both Gold and Bronze medals, with Silver going to Team Great Britain. Asian teams ruled in Women’s Teams Class 4-5, Team Japan of Kinmei Bessho and Fujiwara took the Gold, followed by Hong Kong and Taipei.

Great events do not “just happen.” The hard work it takes to plan, organize, staff, officiate, and legislate international events like the 2005 USA Paralympic Table Tennis Championships require years of advance preparation. Kudos must be sent out to the ever-dedicated Jennifer Johnson, the Tournament Chairperson who seemed prepared at all hours to address all questions. Sharon Franck Brooks did her usual behind the scenes efforts in setting up and running classification as well as being Tournament Co-director – getting volunteers and addressing athlete services. Despite illness keeping Michael LoRusso from being in attendance at the tournament, his endless hours of advance work as Tournament Co-director were critical in arranging for transportation, computer operations, and technical planning. David DelVecchio was stellar stepping in for the ill Mike LoRusso to do computer operations, and good old reliable Jim Beckford for his transportation assistance. A newcomer to the working staff of the Disabled Players Committee of USATT was volunteer on-site coordinator, Elia Leinfowitz of New Orleans. Hospitality was skillfully managed by Carolyne Buehka and Marie Lewis from setting up of registrants packets, to distributing lunches, and giving out of gift “goodies” provided by tournament sponsors and friends. Danielle Brooks, who swears she came out of the womb shagging ping-pong balls, coordinated media and photos, collected athlete feedback and provided hometown media with athlete performances, as well as assisting with transportation, errand running, and occasional tour guide activities. International Classifiers were Dr. Norma Patino of Mexico and Sharon Franck Brooks of the USA, with Gina Maggio of the USA as a Classifier in Training. Tournament Referee responsibilities were handled by Ray Cavicchio of the USA, Assistant Referee was Karol Zidulak of Canada, and Technical Delegate Margita Homolova of Slovakia. Thanks also go out to USATT Head of officials, Wendell Dillon for his help.

Sponsorship for the event was, of course, what makes it all happen. We gratefully acknowledge the support and contribution of the following organizations and individuals:

- American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association, NJ
- Bob Murray and Staff, City of Las Vegas Adaptive Recreation Division
- Calvary Hospital of New York
- Joseph M. Dowling, CPA, Stamford, Connecticut
- Joe Spallino, Ability Center, Las Vegas
- Martin Kilpatrick
- Newgy
- Paddle Palace
- ping-pong.com
- Ruth Chan, Las Vegas Convention Center
- Sean O’Neill, U.S. Paralympics Table Tennis Lead Coach
- Teodor Gheorghe (Doni), Executive Director of the USA Table Tennis
- U.S. Paralympics, a division of the USOC
- Treasure Island at the Mirage, Las Vegas

Volunteer assistance was also welcomed from Nevada Volunteers. Thanks to Rabbi Gary Golbath for that great contact!

In a final medal count by country, France dominated with 4.5 Gold, 7 Silver, and 4 Bronze. The following countries in descending order were: Sweden with 4 Gold and 2 Bronze; Japan with 3.5 Gold, 1 Silver, and 1 Bronze; Germany with 3 Gold, 1 Silver, and 2 Bronze. Which only goes to show that what happens in Vegas, does not ALWAYS stay in Vegas. We can only hope that this Paralympic Table Tennis Championships does.

Results are at: www.usatt.org/news/2005USOpenParalympics.shtml
USATT Rule Changes for Playing Against Disabled Players
By Sean O’Neill, USA Disabled Team Coach

In last month’s Official View Azmy Ibrahim explained a set of new rule changes for wheelchair doubles when competing in USATT events. This month we will focus on a fuller explanation of serving rules for playing against disabled players.

At the 2005 World Championships the ITTF voted on a number of rule changes that drastically impact and encourage tournament play for disabled players. These rule changes primarily affect wheelchair players, but you should also know the basic service rules for standing disabled players.

According to ITTF Law 2.6.6. the umpire may relax the requirements for a good service if he or she is satisfied that compliance is prevented by a physical disability. This rule comes into play if you are playing a standing disabled player missing an arm or a player with cerebral palsy needing to toss the ball with their racket hand. The toss should still be six inches but the player may use the aid of their racket hand or paddle to help toss the ball upward. Some disabled players with the inability to open their palms are also allowed to use more of a cupped hand (or closed fist) to control the ball toss. These players should be able to provide you with their classification card that states that serving requirements can be relaxed due to their disability. This is the only rule that able body players need to be concerned with when playing a standing disabled player. The other new rule changes which went into effect on September 1, 2005 in all USATT and ITTF sanctioned events target wheelchair play.

The wheelchair division is broken up into five divisions with the most physically disabled in the lower classes. Classes 1 and 2 feature quadriplegic athletes that often have very high spinal injuries that affect their balance and muscular strength in all four limbs. These quad players often use a glove or wrist wrap to keep the racket secure in their hand. The before mentioned ITTF Law 2.6.6 will come into play on serving with their palms are also allowed to use more of a cupped hand (or closed fist) to control the ball toss. These players should be able to provide you with their classification card that states that serving requirements can be relaxed due to their disability. This is the only rule that able body players need to be concerned with when playing a standing disabled player. The other new rule changes which went into effect on September 1, 2005 in all USATT and ITTF sanctioned events target wheelchair play.

One of the biggest challenges facing wheelchair players when they compete is the area of receiving serves. Since wheelchair players lack the ability to move around the corner to reach short, wide serves as quickly as their able body counterparts, adaptive service rules have been in place to level the playing field and make the game more enjoyable and competitive.

When serving to a wheelchair player, a serve is a let if the ball leaves the table by either of the receiver’s sidelines (on one or more bounces). If any part of a player’s wheelchair shall protrude beyond the imaginary extension of the center line of the table, the umpire shall award the point to the opposing pair.

The International Paralympic Table Tennis Committee (IPTTC) service rules have been in effect for head-to-head wheelchair competitions for many decades and are now being observed by the ITTF and USATT when able body players play wheelchair players. The belief is this will encourage more wheelchair athletes to compete in able body events knowing that matches won’t turn into exercises of unreachable serves. If you are ever unsure of the service rules when facing a disabled player just ask the tournament referee for clarification.

Differences in the Rules for Able Bodied and Athletes with Disabilities
By Karol Ziduliak, Deputy Referee

Providing that the receiver is in a wheelchair due a physical disability a let shall be called if in service the ball:

- In singles leaves the table by either of the receiver’s sidelines (on one or more bounces);
- Comes to rest on the receiver’s half of the playing surface;
- After touching the receiver’s half of the playing surface returns in the direction of the net.

A concrete floor is, in principle, acceptable for wheelchairs.

Note: All the above rules have become part of ITTF Rules as of Sept. 1, 2005.

So if you find yourself playing against a player in wheelchair you have to play by these rules.

There are no exceptions to the ITTF Laws of table tennis for standing players with a disability.

Unstable Tennis from Cartoonjazz.com
Interested in table tennis club t-shirts, screensavers or wall art? See www.cartoonjazz.com or call 732-283-8700. Part of the proceeds go to USATT. See below!

"I THINK HE NEEDS TO WORK ON HIS ANTICIPATION."
Mitchell Seidenfeld

Age: 43
Home Club: Table Tennis Minnesota
Style of Play: All-Around Attacker
Coach: Sean O'Neill
Sponsor: Table Tennis Pioneers/ping-pong.com
Equipment: Banda Allround blade, Banda Sigma 2.0 on BH, Andro Maxcell 2.0 on FH
Class: 10

Mitchell Seidenfeld returned to competitive table tennis for the disabled at the Pan Am Cup in Argentina in July of 2005. He won a gold, silver, and bronze medal and qualified for the 2006 World Championships. Mitchell, the 1990 World Champion and 1992 Paralympic gold medalist in Class 8 Singles (for leg disabilities), now must compete in Class 10 against players with disability in only their non-playing arm. He has pseudochondroplasia dwarfism and is currently working on new elements to make his game more competitive with the powerful Class 10 players. Mitchell spends over half of his workweek organizing clubs, leagues, tournaments, and coaching programs around the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. This makes him one of the few table tennis professionals in the United States.

Bob Bowlander

Age: 53
Home Clubs: West Alabama Club in Anniston, and all the Atlanta clubs (A.G.T.T.A., Ben Hill, Coan Park, and the Jewish Community Center).
Style of Play: All-Around Blocker and Attacker
Coach: Sean O'Neill
Equipment: Oversized Nittaku Monophonic Blade, Dr. Neubauer Super Defense and Butterfly Challenger 1.8 soft
Class: 8

At the 2003 Para Pan Am Championships in Brazil, Bob won fourth place in the Open, Silver in Class 8, and a Class 10 Team Gold. In 2004 at the U.S. Paralympic Open in Colorado Springs, Bryce Luu and Bob won the Bronze in Class 8 Team beating Sweden. In July 2005 at the Para Pan Am Championships in Argentina, Bob won a Silver in Class 8 Singles and Silver in Teams with Doug Younan. Last December Dave Skrzypczak and Bob won a team Bronze at 2005 U.S. Open Paralympic Championships in Las Vegas.

Ed Levy

Age: 19
Home Club: Lewis & Clark College TTC
Style of Play: Consistent Spinner, Blocker
Coach: Sean O'Neill
Sponsor: Nike
Equipment: Butterfly Andrzej Grubba, STIGA Magna Rubber
Class: 7

Ed qualified for the 2006 World Disabled Championships by winning the Class 7 team event at the 2005 Para Pan Am Games with teammates Chris Puls and Ed Levy. Ed has competed for the United States in Spain, Slovakia, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil. Ed’s disability is cerebral palsy, which he contracted at birth. Ed began playing in 1994 at the Greensboro Table Tennis Club in North Carolina. Ed currently resides in Portland, Or. where he is a freshman at Lewis and Clark College.

Tahl Leibovitz

Age: 30
Hometown: Ozone Park, NY
Coaches: Sean O’Neill, Mohsen Javalieri and Earl Young
Club: Killerspin Big Apple Table Tennis Academy
Sponsors: Table Tennis Pioneers/ping-pong.com, USOC, FILA, United Airlines, Gateway and Team Continuum. (Newgy has been very helpful).
Equipment: Stiga Energy Wood Racket, Mendo MP Max on forehand, Mendo Energy Max on backhand
Class: 9

Tahl qualified for the 2006 World Disabled Championships by winning three Gold Medals at the 2005 Para Pan Am Championships with help from his Doubles Partner Mitch Seidenfeld. Tahl has a very rare bone condition which limits his mobility. His titles include 2005 USOC Table Tennis Player of The Year, 2-time IPTTC USA Player of The Year; a Gold and Bronze Medal at the 1996 Paralympics, and a Bronze in 2004; 2003 & 2005 Para Pan Am 2-time Triple Gold Medalist; IPTTC World Championships Bronze Medalist; Czech Open Paralympic Champion; and U.S. Open Paralympic Champion. Tahl also competes successfully in able body events, and is a 2-time U.S. National Men’s Doubles Semifinalist, 2004 U.S. Olympic Singles Trials Top 10 finisher, a 2004 U.S. Olympic Doubles Qualifier, and a 2001 U.S. World Team Trials Top 10 Finisher. He also won a Bronze medal at the 15th World Maccabiah Games in 1997.

Norm Bass

Age: 66
Home Club: Rogers Park TTC (California)
Style of Play: Hardbat Chopper
Coach: Sean O'Neill
Sponsor: Nike
Class: 7

Norm qualified for the 2006 World Disabled Championships by winning the Class 7 team event at the 2005 Para Pan Am Games with teammates Chris Puls and Ed Levy. Norm won a bronze medal in the Class 7 event at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney Australia. Norm has also competed for the United States in Taiwan, Argentina and Brazil. Norm is the first post-World War II African American to play two professional sports. He played Major League Baseball for the Kansas City Athletics from 1961-1963 and AFL football for the 1964 Denver Broncos. Norm currently resides in Inglewood, Ca.

Andre Scott

Home Club: TWU
Style of Play: Aggressive Blocker
Coach: Sean O’Neill
Sponsors: Table Tennis Pioneers/ping-pong.com
Equipment: Stiga Aluminum Tube, Magna Black and Red 2.0
Class: 5

Canada Dominates

The U.S. Open Teams started out as the Inter-cities in the 1930s. It was held in Detroit almost continuously from 1961 to 1997 (going elsewhere only in 1962, 1964 and 1973-74). In 1998 they moved to Baltimore, and became the North American Teams. So why not revive them as the U.S. Open Teams, and put it on the west coast, where it’s never been held? And so it was arranged in Reno, Nevada, right on the California border.

Let’s thank USA Table Tennis and sponsors Butterfly, Nittaku and TMS International for bringing it about! Let’s also thank North American Table Tennis (Richard Lee, Fong Hsu, Wendy Troy, Chris Troy, Tom Nguyen and Alan Williams), who ran the event flawlessly on time, except when previous rounds held things up—such as the marathon Division One semifinals. Also a big thank you to the 25 referees and umpires who attended, including Referee Azmy Ibrahim, Deputy Referee Marc Richard, and Chief Umpire Wendell Dillon. USATT President Sheri Pittman, Treasurer Tong Nguyen and Alan Williams, who ran the event flawlessly on time.

Wilson Zhang of the Championship Canada 2008 Team

Media coverage was very good, with articles almost every day in the sports section of the Reno Journal Gazette, and news coverage from three television stations. It seemed to work as a lot of spectator passes were sold to spectators, according to Tournament President Richard Lee.

Not that it was all perfect. At an altitude of 4500 feet (compared to 2200 feet for the USA Nationals in Las Vegas and 6000 feet for Colorado Springs, site of USATT Headquarters and various table tennis events), the ball traveled a little differently than some expected. The thinner air meant the ball traveled a little faster and deeper. Spin died down more slowly, and the ball arced less than normal.

"They should never play a major tournament again at high altitude," said USA Junior Boys’ Team member Misha Kazantsev. Misha said he never felt comfortable playing in the thin air, and twice he blew big leads. Misha wasn’t alone in this. Players seemed split between those who felt they adjusted (often control-type players) and those who did not.

A bigger problem was the lack of entries. In Detroit and Baltimore, the Teams normally had nearly 200 entries. In Reno there were only 48. (That came out to just over $350 in prize money per team.) This was a disappointment as it was thought that there would be a lot more California entries, with Reno about 200 miles from San Francisco. Some players were at the Arnold Fitness Classic (scheduled before the dates of the U.S. Open Teams were set), including most of the top USA players, sent there by sponsor Killerspin.

"The lack of entries is probably because there are so many tournaments in California, and they just had the Western Open," said USA Junior Boys’ Coach Masaaki Tajima. "It’s also about costs. These four star events are expensive. We had the Baltimore Teams in November, the nationals in December, the Sacramento Winter Open (not as expensive) and the Western Open in Berkeley in February. There are a lot of players in California but if you’re looking for them to support all these events, that is asking a lot when you also add the cost of travel." Despite the low turnout, plans are already being made to run the event again next year, perhaps in California.

The tournament used 36 tables, with another four for practice. Twelve were individually barriered, the rest were partially barriered. There was lots and lots of room for players, with 16 feet between tables. Eight of the courts had the red flooring, the rest were concrete (which some complained was too slippery).

It was a bit disappointing that the USA Men’s Team wasn’t here to take on the Canadians and others. The top seven finishers at the USA Nationals were not present. Ilija Lupulesku, Mark Hazinski, Adam Hugh and Barney J. Reed were all at the Arnold Fitness Classic. Cheng Yinghua was home coaching. Han Xiao was busy with school. And Darko Rop didn’t attend either. David Zhuang, who (partially due to injuries) finished 8th at the Nationals was the highest men’s finisher present.

The life of a USA Team member ... Jackie Lee, a junior architecture major at University of California at Berkeley, had a mid-term exam for her "Classics" class. She finished the five-page written exam (on Roman Civilization) here at the Teams. As she had pre-arranged, she had Sean O’Neill take digital photos of each page, and emailed them to her professor. (Due to a slow internet connection, the professor couldn’t receive them, and Sean later had to fax them from his laptop.)

Best team names: "Bwahahahaha," "The Cinnamon Toast Coco Puffs," "Four Biological Brothers" (who obviously weren’t), "Funkie Junkies," and "Jennifer Durst" (see later note). I’m sure "Amor Reno" (the senior team winner) means something creative, so I’ll give them honorable mention.

The New Olympic Teams Format

The format used was the one adopted by the ITTF for use in the team event at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing (where teams will replace doubles for the first time). Each team will play three players, who will be
designated as ABC or XYZ. One player on each team will play two singles matches; the other two players will play one singles and one doubles match (together). The best of five format is as follows:

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Teams do not set the doubles team until after the first two matches are played. As soon as those two are played, the team captain must decide the doubles team, with the third player (the one who hasn’t played yet) paired with one of the two who played in the first two singles matches.

One special rule was put in for this event. To give players more matches, all team ties were played out (i.e. they didn’t end at 3-0 or 3-1) except in Division One starting on Saturday.

The advantages of the system are best given by the ITTF’s guidelines in creating the format: “A best of five format was wanted where there would be doubles, with three players playing on each side, with no player playing more than two of the matches.”

Players seemed somewhat split on whether they liked the new format, but most seemed to either like it, or (as they got used to it) adjusted to it. Many thought it was difficult to understand initially, and that there was too much randomness built into it since who played who in singles was decided by the playing order set by each team, which was done not knowing the other team’s playing order.

“Overall players were pleased with the new Olympic Teams format,” said Alan Williams, the Marketing Director for North American Table Tennis. “They expressed a willingness to play it again.”

So what did some of the top players, coaches and officials think of the new format? Alan asked around, and got these responses.

Gao Jun, U.S. #1 Woman: “It’s good, but it’s seems a little complicated to me. Yesterday I made a mistake and it cost my team a tie. I thought the other coach would play their #3 player in fourth match singles, but he played in fifth singles and that created a mismatch. This format gives hard choices for coaches. It is harder to ‘hide’ a weak player on your roster. If you are all strong, no problem.”

Sean O’Neill, USA Cadet Boys’ Coach: “I’m learning with each fixture, think it adds excitement and is better than other three-player formats ITTF has previously tried. I’ve learned that an advantage can be gained if you can anticipate the other coach’s decision. ABC vs. XYZ choices are important, whether you want to try to win 3-1 by mismatching on the singles or play for a 3-2 win. Also, I think this format rewards depth on a team, rather than just being Singles Version Two.”

Bence Csaba, Canada 2008 USOTC Champions: “It’s all right; it’s nice and short and allows us to get on with our lives. I don’t like sitting around between matches and this format keeps play brisk. Doubles is cool, but the second position is hardest to play. Second singles versus first singles determines the whole tie. If that match is a surprise result, then the tie is all over.”

Azmy Ibrahim, International Referee and the tournament referee: “I think umpires have to be fastidious in their record-keeping with this format. Ensuring the order of play is best done from the start of the match, in order to prevent error.”

Early Rounds

Friday morning greeted players with several inches of snow, and a number of junior players had the expected snowball fights before competition began at noon.

The format started off with tennis in preliminary groups on Friday to decide whether they’d be in Division One or Two. The top four teams were seeded out, while the other 44 were put in ten round robins of 4-5 teams. The top two teams in each group (20 teams) joined the foul-teams seeded out in Division One. The other 24 teams were put in Division Two.

On Saturday, teams in both divisions were in groups of six. The top two in each group advanced to the quarterfinals of their division on Sunday, with the rest in follow-up round robins on Sunday to decide placement.

The “upset” of the tournament (and quite a comeback’) took place on Friday when Erick Shahnazari and Ethan Chua upset Dave Sakai and Ron VonSchimmelmann in doubles, 13, 4, 8, 1, 6. However, the seniors swept the singles.

Tactical match of the tournament: I watched Loc Ngo (2321) against Canada’s Chris Xu (2262), a chopper, and it was a lesson on playing
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choppers. There are more than one way to do this, but I’m guessing few who watched (and there was a crowd watching this crowd-pleasing attacker versus chopper match) saw what Loc was doing. He would push heavy once or twice, then he’d throw a no-spin push at her (contacting the ball near the handle with less grazing motion), and immediately get ready to attack the next ball. Against the no-spin, Chris had trouble keeping the ball down, and so Loc jumped on it over and over with powerful loops. If Chris chopped the first one back low, Loc would just push and start over.

There were two matches of interest on Saturday among the top seeds.

NYAC Men vs. Chengdu

Both of these teams would be advancing to the quarterfinals, so they were just playing for seeding. The loser would be seeded to face the powerful Canada 2008 team in the semifinals. More importantly, this was our first look at the Chengdu team against a truly strong team.

NYAC Men features three powerhouse players, including former Chinese team member Jiang... no, not THAT Jiang! Jiang Weizhong, 37, from Shanghai, was a member of the Chinese National Team in 1990 and is currently playing for the Burgos team in the Spanish League. His estimated rating of 2750 “is very accurate,” according to teammate Chetan Baboor. “Chet,” 31, rated 2626, is a former Indian Champion now living in New Jersey who made the final of Men’s Singles at the Asian Cup in 1997 and the semifinals in 2000, and the semifinals of the Asia Top 12 in 1999. The third player is USA’s very own four-time men’s champion David Zhuang, 42, rated 2691. Zhuang and Jiang are vintage pips-out penholders while Baboor is a two-winged looper.

Playing for Chengdu are penholder Xi Guo, 18, and shakehanders Chao Huang Bang, 18, and Yang Zhang, 20. Xi has been in the U.S. for the past three months working with the Palo Alto junior players in the San Francisco bay area, and there is speculation that perhaps he can be convinced to stay. He’s on a six month visa.

Except for the first match, every match here was a close battle. In match #1, Jiang shows that that 2750 really is accurate, defeating Yang Zhang at 4,6,5.

In match #2, Xi seems to have things under control against Chet. Xi is up 2-1 in games, and up 10-3 match point. That’s seven match points. At 10-7 he calls a timeout. At 10-8, he can only shake his head at where all those match points went, and why so many of his serves went long (thin air?) allowing Chet to loop. Xi has another match point at 11-10, but still cannot convert. Chet has three ads (12-11, 13-12, 14-13). Chet misses a forehand rip from his backhand corner at 14-all, and then loops Xi’s serve off as Xi can finally break easy with his 5-9,8,14 victory.

In the doubles, Chengdu (Xi and Chao) win the first two, but nothing’s easy for them this team match as Jiang/Zhuang win the next two, the fourth at deuce. Chengdu wins the doubles, 5,1,1,-5,10,6.

Chet, perhaps still on a roll from his near comeback earlier, wins the first two against Chao, loses the third, gets clobbered in the fourth (11-11) and loses the match, -9,-7,7,1,8.

So it all comes down to match #5. Zhuang versus Yang. Considering Yang’s difficulties against fellow pips-out penholder Jiang, Zhuang should be a favorite. David goes up 10-8 in the first, Yang gets an edge, but David wins 11-9. Then it’s all Yang for two games as he can do no wrong, winning at 6 & 4 (leading 6-0 in the third). David seems lost, unable to find a way to stop the onslaught of forehand putaway loops. His own forehand hitting seems off (and in fact seems off this entire tournament). Then, down 6-7 in the fourth, David scores four in a row to lead 10-7... and then it’s 10-all! But David wins the next two, the last on a nice drop shot followed by a flip to an open table. Things are tied up 2-2 as we go to the last game.

David takes a 3-0 lead, seems on a roll. Then Yang takes a timeout. When he returns, he scores five in a row, 3-5. Then David scores two in a row, 5-5. Then Yang scores four in a row, 5-9. The two seem determined to alternate scoring runs — and there’s one more scoring run left as David, from the depths, scores six in a row to win the match! (The last one was on a down-the-line serve that catches Yang stepping around, forcing a weak return that David smashes.) It’s 9-6,4-10,9 for David as he runs screaming into the arms of his teammates. Such dramatic victories come rarely and are to be savored.

The Threesome vs. Butterfly Girls

Of the matches to advance to the quarters, this was the only tightly contested one.

The team match starts off with a big upset as the Butterfly Girls’ Sara Fu (rated 2391) upsets Freddie Gabriel (2530), -6,7,5,3. In match #2, Peter Zajac (2374) wins the first two against Whitney Ping (2342), but Whitney wins the next two. Peter goes up 5-0 in the fifth, but cannot hold it as Whitney ties it at 9-all. Peter goes up 10-9 match point, but Whitney gets a net dribbler to reach deuce. Peter wins the next two. Peter goes up 5-0 in the fifth.

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Quarterfinals

(Note — starting here, all singles matches are best of seven.)

Canada 2008 d. California J Leaguers, 3-0

Canada 2008 reminds this writer of Canada’s former strength during its run with Johnny Huang in singles, Joe Ng/Horatio Pintea in doubles (reaching the quarters of the Worlds in 1991). Now it’s Wilson Zhang in singles, Bence Csaba/Faazil Kassam in doubles. In both cases, it gave Canada a powerful 1-2-3 punch, with pretty strong 4-5 jabs as well! Canada cruised past the California “J” (for Japanese) Leaguers as Zhang defeated Takayuki Abe, 2,5,4; Csaba defeated Tatsuya Honda, 10,8,5,8,7; and Csaba/Kassam defeated Honda/Saori Mihara, 3,7,9,3.

Canada 2006 d. NYAC Newvy Women, 3-1

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2006
With Gao Jun (world #7 woman, long-time USA #1, rated 2651) as their anchor and a threat to take two matches against almost any team, the NYAC Newyork Women knew they had a chance. But they decided to pull a tactical switch, putting Gao in the doubles in the hopes that they’d win that match (along with Gao’s lone single match) and get better matchups in the singles. At first it seemed to have paid off, as it allowed them to play Gao against Canada 2006’s #1, Pradeeban Peter-Paul, rated 2640. If Gao could win that match, it not only gave the women a win, it took away an expected win for the Canadians. However, there’s a complication—Gao’s got a fever and her voice is hoarse. She’s pretty sick.

And yet win it she did, 7-7, 6-3, 6. Showing the mental strength that has fueled her long career. “Peter-Paul likes players to play hard at him and outlast them,” said USA Women’s Coach Doru Gheorghe. “Gao plays soft, and he doesn’t like that.” It would be Gao’s last singles match; she would finish undefeated in singles. (She would later lose two practice matches against a smiling Justin Yao, a member of the USA Cadet Boys’ Team, rated 2227—but she was spouting 7-8 points per game!)

Next up is Tawny Bahn (2455) against Canada’s Qiang Shen (2589). Tawny wins game one, but despite ferocious rallies, cannot pull out the match as Shen wins, 8-7, 8, 8, 8, 6.

The women’s strategy starts to fall apart when Gao Jun/Crystal Huang (2473) begin to falter in doubles against Shen/Pierre-luc Hinse (2539) as they lose the first two games badly. Gao is a conventional pips-out penholder with an emphasis on blocking and pick hitting. Crystal is a more “modern” penholder, with an inverted reverse penhold backhand (i.e. uses the back of her penhold racket for backhands). The two women pull even, winning the next two with great hitting and blocking. The Canadians win the next two and the match, 7-3, 7-7, 7-7, 7-7, 7-7.

Next up is Tawny again, against Hinse. This one was a seesaw battle with more ferocious rallies (have you ever seen a match involving Tawny that wasn’t?), with Hinse winning the match, 10-8, 6-10, 6-10.

**NYAC Men d. The Threesome, 3-0**

Against The Threesome, two of the matches are quick 4-0’s as Jiang defeats Freddie Gabriel, 8-7, 5-2, and in match #3, Zhuang/Baboor defeat Gabriel/lefty Peter Zajac, 9-4, 7-4. In match #2 David is having unexpected difficulties with Jackie Lee. “I can’t treat her like a little girl anymore!” David exclaims at one point. The match goes 2-2, and at 8-all in the sixth is on the verge of going seven before David wins three straight points and the match, 5-9, 7-5, 6-8.

**Chengdu d. Jennifer Dursy, 3-1**

Who’s Jennifer Dursy? Why, that’s Dr. De Tran’s wife! Lefty De (2463, former USA team member) had an inspired start against Chengdu’s Yang Zhang, losing the first 15-13 but romping in the next two before Yang came back, 13-6, 2-8, 7-10. When the Jennifer’s team’s Shao Yu (2507) did romp against Xi Guo in match #2, 13-7, 3-5, 6, things got rather serious for the Chengdu team, who might have been down 0-2. In doubles, Chengdu (Xi Guo/Shao Huang Bang) were romping, winning the first two against De/Paul David (2459) at 2 and 4. But things weren’t over yet as the Jennifer’s won the next two games, and were at deuce in the fifth before Chengdu pulled it out in six, 2-4, 8-9, 10-6. In match #4, Chengdu ended it with a bang as Bang defeated Shao Yu, 4-3, 4-9, 5, in a battle of shakhandlers with pips on the backhand.

**Semifinals**

**Canada 2008 d. Chengdu, 3-0**

Canada 2008 continues to play like a buzzsaw. In match #1, Bence Csaba easily wins against Yang Zhang, 10-6, 8-4, 4. In match #2, against Xi Guo, Wilson Zhang wins the first 11-0 (Xi kept looping “winners” to Wilson’s forehand, and Wilson kept looping them back as “winners”). Wilson leads 10-9 in the second before faltering. He wins the next three easily, scoring six in a row from 5-all in the fourth as he wins the match, 0-12, 5, 5, 5. The doubles is also mostly one-sided, with a similar second game blip before Csaba/Kassam win, 4-14, 7, 9, 8.

**Canada 2006 d. NYAC Men, 3-2**

Canada’s Peter-Paul’s only loss so far has been to Gao Jun, and his problems with pips-out penholders continue as NYAC’s Jiang completely dominates match #1, 7, 7, 7, 5.

Next up is Canada’s junior phenom Qiang Shen (16, rated 2589) against the more experienced David Zhuang. Shen plays very steady throughout the match, systematically picking out balls to loop away, rarely giving David a chance to force errors. David’s still having trouble with his smash and he misses a number as he loses the first two games. David wins game three, and leads 7-3 in the fourth. He loses four in a row (7-all), then goes up 10-7 in winning 11-8. Shen wins game five and goes up 10-8 match point in game six. He serves and rips-off! Then misses a backhand, and David’s done another comeback, 10-All. Or has he? David blocks off, and this time Shen’s serve & rip hits as the Canadian junior wins, 9-7, 8, 8, 10, and things are tied up 1-1.

NYAC Men has been varying their doubles team nearly every match, trying to find the right combo. This time they send out Jiang/Baboor against Canada’s Shen/Hinse. It goes the distance, with Canada winning, 7-8, 9-3, 10-8, 8, 8.

David keeps things alive by defeating 18-year-old Hinse, 8-8, 10, 8, 7 (down 9-10 in the third game). So it’ll be decided in the fifth match, between Peter-Paul (“Pradi”) and Chet.

Pradi starts out completely dominating, winning the first three with ease. The Chet who was once ranked in the top 70 in the world as a full-time player is now just a part-time player, while Pradi trains full-time at the Canadian Training Center.

But a little of the Chet of old comes back as he wins game four, 11-9. In game six, it’s all Pradi who leads 7-2. Then the Chet of old scores six in a row and soon leads 10-8 and 11-10 as he wins 13-11. In game six, the score is 4-3 for Pradi when the Canadian gets two net winners in a row. Chet can only shake his head, but Pradi, now leading 6-3, runs it out as he wins the match to advance Canada 2008 into the all-Canadian final, 8-7, 9-11, 11-6.

This semifinal took nearly three and a half hours to complete, a bit more than the two hours scheduled, postponing the final nearly an hour.

**Final**

**Canada 2008 d. Canada 2006, 3-1**

The final is anticlimactic. It’s just another practice session back at the Canadian Training Center, right? Says Faaizil Kassam, “It’s not like playing at the training center—much more pressure!” He’s referring to the prize money, since the winning team will get $7000, the runner-ups $3000. (The semifinalists get $1200, the quarterfinalists $600.)

The most interesting match was the first one, where Bence almost ran away with it over Pradi. After Pradi won the first at 3, Bence won the next three at 7, 9, 2. (When Pradi takes a timeout in game four, Bence’s teammates have to motion for him to come over: “I didn’t know it was a timeout for me also!” he says, perhaps half seriously.) Then it was Pradi’s turn, winning game five at 5, and leading 8-2 in the sixth. Then it was 10-8, down game point at 10-11, finally 13-11 for Pradi. In the seventh, Pradi was behind 4-7 but scores seven in a row (!) to win the match, 3-7, 9-2, 5, 11-7. So Canada 2006 took a temporary 1-0 lead over Canada 2008.

However, Canada 2008 now played their “Big Three” back to back to back. Wilson Zhang played matches #2 and #4, winning at 6, 5, 4, 2 and 6, 5, 8, 4 over Hinse and Shen. In the doubles, it was Csaba/Kassam over Hinse/Shen. Csaba/Kassam won the first three (with the highlight Csaba’s running into the umpire table during a point in game two and then, yes, jokingly kissing it?) and had two match points in game five before winning in six, 11, 8, 1-8, 11-3, 6. So Canada 2008 defeats teammates Canada 2006 to win the 2006 U.S. Open Team Championships.

**Canada Training Center**

I discussed Canadian table tennis with Faaizil Kassam, a member of the winning team here. He told me their team is required to train at their National Training Center. And here is where Canada Table Tennis has a major advantage over USA Table Tennis. The Canadian government funds their national training center. All six members of the winning Canada

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2008 and Canada 2006 Men’s Teams, as well as the Canada 2008 Women’s Team (Mo Zhang, Judy Long and Sara Yuen), train there full time, along with others such as Xavier Therien, Guo Peng and Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi. Also training there full-time is USA’s Samson Dubina. Canada also doesn’t have strict trials as we do in the U.S., with younger players chosen to compete on teams for experience rather than older ones who may be better but with less future potential.

**Misha’s Meanderings**

U.S. Junior Boys’ Team member Misha Kazantsev, 17, had his tribulations this tournament. Sometimes things go from bad to worse to … worse? The USA Junior Boys’ team played “Butterfly Girls.” Down 1-2 in games to Sara Fu, Misha went up 9-3 in the fourth, only to lose 8 straight points and the match, 5-8, 9-5. Later, against “Jennifer Durst,” Misha would win the first two games against Shao Yu, and go up 5-0 in the third. Shao took a time-out, and when he returned he won that game and the match, 8-8, 8, 5, 7.

And then Misha’s racket disappeared – only to reappear and be found by Misha’s Coach, Masaaki Tajima, in someone else’s bag.

But yes, things got “worse” from there. Against “Butterfly Boys” on Saturday, Misha and Coach Tajima believed Jamaican Joseph Dibbs had coached teammate and countryman Nigel Webb during a match against Misha’s teammate Trevor Runyan, yelling “reverse” at a key point to signal him to use a reverse pendulum serve. After the match, Misha confronted Dibbs on this, and claimed that Dibbs said, “I can do anything I want when there is no umpire.” Misha wrote the words down on the back of the score sheet. Dibbs later denied both coaching during the match and the quote Misha attributed to him.

As fate would have it, these two played next. Misha asked for an umpire (a smart decision, if you believe your opponent had said the above), and umpire Grady Gordon entered the scene. Dibbs won the first game 11-5. It was at 8-all in the second that the fireworks went off. Dibbs served. Misha raised his hand to signal “net ball” and patted the ball back. Dibbs ripped a winner. Umpire Gordon said he didn’t see the net ball, and Dibbs said he didn’t see it either. So Gordon awarded the point to Dibbs, 9-8.

This was too much for Misha. He would later say that he believed that the umpire made an honest mistake, but that Dibbs was cheating. He threw his racket, kicked over the barriers and threw them at the umpire. Dibbs threw his racket, kicked over the barriers and threw at least one, and cursed at Dibbs with profane language. He then stormed out of the court. Dibbs later denied both coaching and saying anything about Misha.

As noted above, none of this excuses his actions, as he fully admitted later on.

**USA Junior & Cadet Teams**

As noted above, **USA Junior Boys**, coached by Masaaki Tajima, lost Misha Kazantsev early on. However, Trevor Runyan and John Leach battled on, starting every tie down 0-2. On Saturday, in their group of six, they finished in a three-way tie for third with a record of 2-3. In the tie-breaking procedure, they were 3-4 in games (with the 0-3 loss to Butterfly Boys costly) and so finished fifth in the group. On Sunday, playing in the 17-20 playoffs, they won all three team matches to finish 17th in Division One.

**USA Junior Girls** (Judy Hugh, Barbara Wei, Athena Fong, Stephanie Shih) underwent major trials and tribulations this tournament, and ending up winning Division Two ... although they weren’t too thrilled with it since they were seeded for the first division, and were easily the best in Division Two.

The problems started on Friday, when Junior Girls’ Coach Lily Yip and daughter Judy Hugh (#1 on team) arrived late and missed all the matches that day. Also stranded was Scott Preiss, who was the #1 player on the “Triple A’s.” We’ll let Lily describe their trials and tribulations:

“We were supposed to arrive in Reno at 11:30 PM on Thursday night, but that flight got delayed two hours and we didn’t get in to San Francisco until 2:00 AM. The next morning (Friday) we were scheduled to take the first morning flight out at 8:40 AM, but that flight got cancelled because of maintenance problems. The rest of the morning and afternoon flights were booked since everyone from the 8:40 flight was rushing to find an open seat. So after missing the 10:30 AM standby flight, Scott Preiss and I decided to drive to Reno since the next flight for sure flight wouldn’t be until 7:30 PM Saturday night. We left a little after noon and didn’t arrive in Reno until 7:15 PM that night. The Junior Girl’s Team was halfway through their last team tie of the day when we arrived.”

She added, “I needed an emergency bathroom stop, but there weren’t any trees on our side of the road so I had to run across the highway! I have never seen so much snow in my life. Luckily we had Scott Preiss, a 3000 level chauffeur. Thank you, Scott!”

So Lily and Judy finally arrived, taking about twice the normal time to drive from San Francisco to Reno due to the snow — but the damage had long been done. Playing without Judy (rated 2354), they were upset.
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Bamboo outer plies makes this blade unique on the market! It is medium in speed and is really outstanding for the spinning game and the allround game. The weight at 78 grams is lighter than average and feels great! Handle: FL, ST / Wt. 78 gm / Plies 5W / Blade only $48.95 / Item: XJSBA

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SPEED 9.5 / SPIN 7.7 / CONTROL 7.9 / POWER 8.7

**JUIC 999 Elite Ultima SV**

JUIC Elite rubber with softer SV Ultima sponge! Combined with the JUIC 999 Elite topt sheet that is so popular for its outstanding tacky spin combined with speed. More re-gluing capability. Sponge: 2.0, 2.5. Reg. $31.95. Item: RJ9EU

SPEED 8.5 / SPIN 9.6 / CONTROL 7.5 / POWER 8.7

**Driva Smash Ultima**

JUIC Ultima high tension sponge is combined with the fantastic Driva Smash topt sheet. and the results are WOW! Very powerful. Highly recommended for the advanced offensive player. Sponge 2.0, 2.5, Reg. $31.95. Item: RJ9DUS

SPEED 8.0 / SPIN 8.0 / CONTROL 8.4 / POWER 8.0

**Driva Smash SV**

JUIC's Ultima sponge is combined with the Driva Smash topt sheet to provide the ultimate rubber for the powerful allround player. Great for a mixed game. Sponge 2.0, 2.5. Reg. $28.95. Item: RJ9DUS

SPEED 8.0 / SPIN 8.0 / CONTROL 8.4 / POWER 8.0

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SPEED 9.0 / SPIN 9.5 / CONTROL 7.5 / POWER 8.6

**Ultima SV**

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SPEED 8.4 / SPIN 8.7 / CONTROL 7.7 / POWER 8.5

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off the table training, footwork and multi-balls drills will be required for our opponent's choice our team's shot instead of us dictating play. More spin and speed. Our footwork is also a step too slow and often our top spins on our forehand side. While our players are happy to slow inc that we are lagging in physical fitness and our ability to make strong &2006 Safir International Tournament in Sweden it is very apparent to each other after each good shot or smart decision. complained. Instead the boys were always attentive and cheering for to sit out each round. Although I tried to balance it out. no one ever to play. Since we had four players in Reno someone was going to have that we arc lagging in physical fitness and our ability to make strong which four players in Reno someone was going to have that we are lagging in physical fitness and our ability to make strong &2006 Safir International Tournament in Sweden it is very apparent to each other after each good shot or smart decision.

Joseph Wang) went 2-1 (winning two ties 5-0, losing the other 0-5) on Friday, and so went into Division One, as seeded. On Saturday, seeded second in their group, they went 3-2 with a rather traumatic loss to “The Hardbat Team” made up of, yes, three hardbatters (i.e. no sponge), Scott Gordon, Lorin Benedict and Andrew Hutzel. This knocked the USA Cadet Girls out of contention for winning the division, putting them into the playoffs for 9-12. On Sunday they went 2-1 to finish 10th in Division Two, 34th overall.

Other Winners
$600 went to the highest finishing:

• Women’s Team (NYAC Newgy Women – Gao Jun, Tawny Barh, Crystal Huang);
• Senior (over 40) Team (Amor Reno – Billy Fu, Josef Badrena, Felipe Campbell, Ivan Rubio);
• Junior Girls’ Team (USA Junior Girls – Judy Hugh, Barbara Wei, Atha Fong, Stephanie Shih);
• Junior Boys’ Team (USA Junior Boys (Trevor Runyan, John Leach); Misha Kazantsev was also on this team, but was disqualified (see section in article) and so forfeited his $200 share.

Results
Division One
Final
Canada 2008 d. Canada 2006, 3-1
• Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN06) d. Bence Csaba (CAN08), 3-7,-9,-2,5,11,7
• Wilson Zhang (CAN08) d. Pierre-luc Hince (CAN06), 11,8,1,9-13,6
• Bence Csaba/Faazil Kassam (CAN08) d. Pierre-luc Hince/Qiang Shen (CAN06), 11,8,1,9-13,6

Semifinals
Canada 2008 d. Chengdu, 3-0
• Bence Csaba (CAN08) d. Yang Zhang (CD), 10,6,-8,4,4
• Wilson Zhang (CAN08) d. Xi Guo (CD), 0-12,5,5,7
• Bence Csaba/Faazil Kassam (CAN08) d. Chao Huang Bang/Xi Guo (CD), 4-14,7,9,8

Canada 2006 d. NYAC Men, 3-2
• Jiang Weizhong (NYAC) d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN06), 7,7,7,5
• Qiang Shen (CAN06) d. David Zhuang (NYAC), 9,7,-8,8,10
• Pierre-luc Hince/Qiang Shen (CAN06) d. Jiang Weizhong/Chetan Baboor (NYAC), 7,-8,9,3,10,8,8
• David Zhuang (NYAC) d. Pierre-luc Hince (CAN06), -8,10,8,7
• Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN06) d. Chetan Baboor (NYAC), 8,7,3,-9,11,6

Quarterfinals
Canada 2008 d. California J Leaguers, 3-0
• Wilson Zhang (CAN08) d. Takayuki Abe (CJL), 2,5,4,4
• Bence Csaba (CAN08) d. Tatsuya Honda (CJL), -10,8,5,8
• Bence Csaba/Faazil Kassam (CAN08) d. Tatsuya Honda/Saori Mihara (CJL), 3,7,9,3

Canada 2006 d. NYAC Newwy Women, 3-1
• Gao Jun (NYAC) d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN06), -7,7,6,3,6
• Qiang Shen (CAN06) d. Tawny Banh (NYAC), -8,7,8,4,8
• Qiang Shen/Pierre-luc Hince (CAN06) d. Gao Jun/Crystal Huang (NYAC), 7,3,7,7,9,7
• Pierre-luc Hince (CAN06) d. Tawny Banh (NYAC), 10,-8,9,6,-10,6

NYAC Men d. The Threesome, 3-0
• Jiang Weizhong (NYAC) d. Freddie Gabriel (TT), 8,7,5,2
• David Zhuang (NYAC) d. Jackie Lee (TT), 5,9,-7,5,6
• David Zhuang/Chetan Baboor (NYAC) d. Freddie Gabriel/Peter Zajac (TT), 9,4,7,7

Chengdu d. Jennifer Durst, 3-1
• Yang Zhang (CD) d. De Tran (JD), 13,-6,2,8,7,10
• Shao Yu (JD) d. Xi Guo (CD), 13,7,3,5,6
• Xi Guo/Chao Huang Bang (CD) d. De Tran/Paul David (JD), 2,4,-8,9,10,6
• Chao Huang Bang (CD) d. Shao Yu (JD), 4,3,4,-9,5
Division Two: 1st USA Junior Girls (Judy Hugh, Barbara Wei,Ath Fong, Stephanie Shih); 2nd Four Musketeers (Mark Johnson, Barry Or, Michael Liu, Gary Fang).

Highest Finishing Women’s Team: NYAC Newy Women (Gao Jun, Tawny Bunch, Crystal Huang).

Highest Finishing Senior Team: Amor Reno (Billy Fu, Josef Badrana, Felipe Campbell, Ivan Rubio).

Highest Finishing Junior Boys’ Team: USA Junior Boys (Trevor Runyan, John Leach; Misha Kazantsev disqualified).

Highest Finishing Junior Girls’ Team: USA Junior Girls (Judy Hugh, Barbara Wei, Atha Fong, Stephanie Shih).

Energy Mastery: Spin

By John Allen, USATT Coaching Chair

This article is the first of a two-part article on the energy of spin and its application in the sport of table tennis. This segment will consider spin in today’s game and review basic principles for striking the ball. The next article will explore spin mastery and striking the ball “in the moment” for winning results.

Today’s game presents us with the greatest spin the sport of table tennis has ever seen. With the advancements in playing rubber, rackets, glue and stroke techniques, we see more total spin and more variations of spin. We also see greater applications of spin in game tactics and strategies. Such as spin deception in serving or applying a spin curve to open up the court.

To gain a better understanding of how to create and generate spin it’s important to reinforce basic principles of striking the ball. An outline of world class table tennis theory & technique by Henan LiAi (1983) provides us with these basic principles:

1. Timing when contacting the ball
2. Application of force and friction
3. Where to contact the ball (most important principle)

Principle I: Timing when contacting the ball

This principle regards timing as the ball bounces on the table prior to contact. This principle must be reinforced frequently in the early stages of teaching a stroke and when applying it to different shots. The following table describes the execution of this principle to various stroke techniques:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stroke Technique</th>
<th>Rising</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Top of Bounce</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Falling</th>
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<td>Counter</td>
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Principle II: Application of Force and Friction

For description we define force as the forward motion in striking the ball and application of friction as the act of skimming or spinning the ball. Every table tennis shot requires varying degrees of force and friction. Example: Loop – maximum friction and less force. Counter and smash – maximum force and less friction. Today’s game requires even greater mastery of variations of force and friction than in the past given the advancements in equipment and technique.

It’s important for a coach to recognize a player’s competence of this principle and adjust development to improve skills where necessary. Also in competition, for tactical & strategic development coaches and players should be adept at assessing an opponent’s competence with this skill.

The degree of applied force can be described as 1) minimum (30-40%), 2) medium (60-80%) and maximum (80-95%).

The final concept of this principle is the direction of force relative to an opponent’s shot described as follows:

- Against topspin
- Against backspin
- Against right sidespin
- Against left sidespin
- Against high ball
- Against low ball

Principle III: Where to contact the ball

In this principle it’s important to distinguish the reference to the front area of the ball (see illustration). Contact “front” area of the ball is determined by trajectory and timing of the ball’s flight pattern. The “front” of the ball is an area, not a specific point.

Size of front contact area in relation to different racquet surfaces should be adjusted as follows:

- a) long pips – smallest contact area
- b) anti-spin – slightly larger than area for long pips
- c) pips-out – slightly larger than anti-spin area
- d) inverted – largest contact area

Area of contact (on front of ball) for various shots:

- a) counter against topspin – above center
- b) smash against backspin – center or below center
- c) block against topspin – above center
- d) loop against topspin – top
- e) loop against backspin – slightly above center
- f) chop against topspin – below center
- g) push against backspin – below center
- h) hit to opponent’s right – contact to right of center
- i) hit to opponent’s left – contact to left of center

It’s important to note that Principle I (timing), Principle II (application of force and friction), and Principle III (contact area) are all closely related. No one principle may be applied without careful consideration of the concomitant relationships with the other two principles.

Mastery of these striking principles into a player’s stroke techniques provides a strong foundation for a player’s competence in receiving and applying spin into their game. Part two of this article will review how spin is used in winning technique and how these basic principles provide a common thread in the spin game of today. Stay tuned...
McAfee’s Mechanics:
The Forehand Flip Serve Return
By Richard McAfee, USATT National Coach & ITTF Coach

Today’s modern game rewards aggressive play and nowhere is this better illustrated than the growing importance of attacking short serves. The move to the larger ball has reduced the amount of spin possible on short serves. Combine this factor with the new rule forbidding hiding the racket-ball contact when serving and you have a situation where it is easier to attack short serves than in past years.

Basic Elements of the Forehand Flip Against a Short Serve
1. Timing: The ball should be contacted at the top of the bounce.
2. Type of Contact: You should make friction (spin) contact with the ball, producing a light topspin.
3. Contact Point on Ball:
   - Against a short under-spin – Contact below the center of the ball.
   - Against a no-spin ball – Contact the center of the ball.

Stroke Description
The stroke is executed using mostly the forearm and some wrist. Most of the force comes from snapping the forearm which should be moving upward at the moment of contact. The racket face should be somewhat open against an under-spin serve and neutral against a no-spin serve.

Upper Body Position
The upper body should be in a closed position which will allow you to rotate your shoulders into the stroke to add some power. Approaching the ball in this position also allows you to direct the return to all areas of the table with power. If you approach with the shoulders open, you can only place the ball crosscourt with power and your opponent will know where your returns are going. (See photos; Ken Lieu demonstrates.)

Footwork
For most short serves, except those to the wide backhand, step in with the right foot. You should try to get your right foot directly under the spot where the ball is contacting the table. For serves wide to your forehand, you may need to use two-step footwork. Remember, that your recovery back into a ready position is an essential part of the stroke. You do not want to get caught leaning over the table by your opponent’s return.

Serve Return Targets
In general, there are three specific targets for your flip serve return.
1. Cross-court, trying to cut the angle between the corner of the table and the net
2. Down-line-deep into the corner
3. Into the opponent’s right elbow (right-handers), trying to handcuff them. It is important to remember that this target is a moving one. You will need to anticipate where your opponent will be moving after the serve.

Practice Drills
Short serve – Flip: Have your training partner serve mixed spin short serves to your forehand 1/3 of the table. Return the serve with a forehand flip to one of the three target areas listed above, then play out the point. As your technique improves, have your partner serve to 2/3 of the table, attack to any of the three target areas, and play out the point.

Short serve – Drop and Flip: In this drill, the server gives a short serve anywhere, the receiver drops the ball back short anywhere, the two exchange drop shots until the server flips and then the point is played out. This is a great drill for working on ball control, movement in and out, and mixing the drop and flip techniques.

Spend some time improving your forehand flip serve returns and you will always be able to force the attack at critical times in the match. At the same time, if your opponent has to respect your flip then you will also find your drop shots to be more effective. Remember the quickest way to improve your results is to improve your serve and serve return.

Two Table Tennis Movies!
The Little White Ball
Two Friends. Two Paddles. One Table. And ... “The Little White Ball.”
This short film from local looks! Films is a mockumentary about two professional table tennis players has been accepted by Portland’s 2006 Faux Film Festival March 30-April 2. Here’s the description from www.thelittlewhiteball.com.

The friendship between Leslie “L” Perkins and Johnny Silver was forged on the playgrounds of Lebanon, Ohio, and has survived for a quarter century. Now, Johnny and L are professional table tennis players going in opposite directions. Johnny is the biggest star in the game but still seeks the legitimacy of his first tournament win; L is a former national champion attempting to reclaim his past glory.

“The Little White Ball” follows L and Johnny as they prepare for Paddiefest, a hometown tournament that could be the high point of...
**Defensive Discipline**

By Carl Danner

The best kind of defensive game constantly challenges the attacker by forcing her to work for every opening or advantage. Not only does this create pressure, it also guards against the one-shot winners that modern attackers can hit off any loose ball.

For defenders, this means making every shot aggressive whenever possible (i.e., where you're not chasing down a forceful drive). Don't just push, dig into the ball and give it sidespin. Move your opponent around. Loop or hit returns that are soft, or deep. Load up your serves with spin. Mix in a few blocks with your chops. Vary your service returns.

This is work, of course. But the discipline of defense requires you to challenge the attacker at every turn, using a style that is anything but passive. That's what you signed up for when you decided to defend in the modern game.

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**Forehand Smash**

By Carl Danner

The smash is a power stroke used to try and finish the rally, usually from a high ball. Ideally, the smash is performed at shoulder height at the top of the bounce. The smash can also be taken early to give the opponent less time, though this is a higher risk stroke.

Another option for higher balls is to jump and make contact in the air, to enable shoulder height contact or to allow the ball to descent to shoulder height.

**Preparation:** The racket is hip high in preparation for a forehand stroke.

**Swing:** When the height of the ball is known, the racket is moved directly behind and slightly above the ball making a line between racket, ball and the opponent's side of the table.

**Contact:** The weight moves forward as contact is made slightly in front of the body.

**Follow Through:** The body weight shifts completely to the left leg, with the stroke finishing head height.

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**Basics Corner: Forehand Smash**

Preparation: The racket is hip high in preparation for a forehand stroke.

Swing: When the height of the ball is known, the racket is moved directly behind and slightly above the ball making a line between racket, ball and the opponent's side of the table.

Contact: The weight moves forward as contact is made slightly in front of the body.

Follow Through: The body weight shifts completely to the left leg, with the stroke finishing head height.

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Biliki has never seen a ping-pong ball before. He and his family live without electricity and running water in a solitary tent home among the vast steppe grasslands. The magnificent landscape here has changed little since the days of Genghis Kahn. But life in the middle of nowhere can be exciting for a young boy. The smallest of details become big events for curious Bilike and his best friends Erguotou and Dawa. The mystery of the small white ball floating in the creek leads to questions about the world around them, as well as innocent mischief. Bilike's grandmother says the ball is a glowing pearl from heaven. But the boys are skeptical after waiting all night outdoors for the ball to light up. Since nobody has an idea about the odd white object, they trek to the faraway monastery to consult the wise lamas. But even the grasslands' most knowledgeable inhabitants are stumped. While watching the new TV-set Dawa's father has won, the boys learn about ping-pong. They are excited to hear that their object is the "national ball of China." Not realizing how far Beijing actually is, the determined young boys set off to return the ball to the Chinese capital...

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**Lü cao di (Mongolian Ping-Pong)**

This movie, written and directed by Hao Ning, was shown at the Seattle and Chicago Film Festivals in 2005. Here is the plot summary from www.imdb.com:
USATT Approved Equipment Dealer List

This is the official USA Table Tennis Approved Equipment Dealer List from January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006. Help support USA Table Tennis by buying only USATT officially approved equipment from these suppliers.

Alpha Products (1)
Diego Schaff
400 El Nido Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91107
Phone: 800-500-5057
Web: www.alphatabletennis.com

American Table Tennis (2)
Guenther Schroeder
29393 Murray Crescent
Southfield, MI 48076
Phone: 800-825-7664
Fax: 313-356-5871
Web: www.americantabletennis.com

DHS America, Inc. (3)
Mark Vaintroim
1300 Alinex Street Unit 1-A
Concord Ontario, L4K 2W6 Canada
Phone: 905-761-6605
877-PLAY-DHS (7529-347)
Fax: 905-761-6724
E-mail: info@dhsamerica.com
WEB: www.dhsamerica.com

Dr Neubauer Table Tennis GmbH. (4)
Aafler Huth 7
39045 Nurnberg, Germany
(De Neubauer Rubbers)

Distributor: Paddle Palace
Judy Hsiaofrost/ Michael Boschekisch
7637 SW 23rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97219
Phone: 800-547-5891
Fax: 503-777-4062
Web: www.paddelpalace.com

Distributor: Hallmark Table Tennis Ltd. (6)
Anne Hall
Hallmark House
51 Ash Lane
Wells Somerset
UK BAS 2LW
Web: www.hallmarkart.com
(Hallmark Rubber)

Distributor: Padle Palace
Judy Hordeof/Michael Boschekisch
7637 SW 234th Avenue
Portland, OR 97219
Phone: 800-547-5891
Fax: 503-777-4062
Web: www.paddelpalace.com

JOLLA Tischtennis GmbH & Co. KG (7)
D-76853 Siebeldingen/Pfalz Wiesenthr. 13, GERMANY
WEB: www.joola.de
E-mail: info@joola.de
(JOLLA Balls, Net Sets, Rubber, and Tables)

Distributor: Paddle Palace
Judy Hordeof/Michael Boschekisch
7637 SW 234th Avenue
Portland, OR 97219
Phone: 800-547-5891
Fax: 503-777-4062
Web: www.paddelpalace.com

Juic Co., Ltd. (8)
Peter Shioda
P.O. Box 12
No. 6-1 Nobitome 4 chome
Niza City, Saitama Pref., JAPAN
(Juic Rubber)

Distributor: Paddle Palace
Judy Hordeof/Michael Boschekisch
7637 SW 23rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97219
Phone: 800-547-5891
Fax: 503-777-4062
Web: www.paddelpalace.com

Killerspin, LLC (9)
Mr. Robert Blackwell, Jr.
100 S Wacker Drive Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60606-4002
Phone: 312-732-6022
Web: www.killerspin.com
(Killerspin Ball, Net Set, Rubbers, and Table)

Lily Yip Sports (10)
Lily Yip
14 Dock Watch Hollow Rd
Warren NJ 07059
Phone: 908-764-2293
Email: atlantic96@mso.com
Web: www.doublefish-us.com
(Double Fish Ball and Table)

Martin-Kilpatrick Co. (11)
Bowie Martin
4482 Technology Drive
Wilson, NC 27896
Phone: 800-334-8315
Fax: 919-291-8203
Web: www.killerspin.com
(MK Balls, Net Sets, Rubbers, and Butterly)

Newgy Industries, Inc. (12)
Larry Thomann
805 Teal Drive
P.O. Box 959
Gallatin, TN 37066
Phone: 615-452-6470
FAX: 615-230-9875
Web: www.newgy.com
(Newgy Ball Machine, Net Sets and Rubbers)

Nippon Takkyu Co., Ltd. (13)
Masaru Matsumoto
1-2-8 Kanda-Izumicho
Chiyodiku-Ku
Tokyo, JAPAN
(Niitaku Balls and Rubbers)

Distributor: Paddle Palace
Judy Hordeof/Michael Boschekisch
7637 SW 23rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97219
Phone: 800-547-5891
Fax: 503-777-4062
Web: www.paddelpalace.com

Paddle Palace (14)
Judy Hordeof/Michael Boschekisch
7637 SW 23rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97219-1860
Phone: 800-547-5891
Fax: 503-777-4062
E-mail: tt@paddelpalace.com
Web: www.paddelpalace.com
(De Neubauer, Hallmark, Juic, Niitaku, Stiga, and Tihbar)

Robbins Sports (15)
Dan Robbins
3846 James Drive
Clintom Township, MI 48036
Phone: 800-727-2119
FAX: 586-468-8760
Web: www.robbinstabletennis.com
(Spin Tech Balls and Rubber)

Scholer & Micke GmbH (16)
Anja Miecke
Markische Str. 82a
44141 Dortmund, Germany
Phone: +49-231-9588-21
Fax: +49-231-9588-89
Email: iang@schoelermiecke.de
(Andros Balls, Net Sets, Rubbers, and Tables)

Distributor: California Table Tennis Co.
Sydney Asser
1367 Berkly Place
Livermore, CA 94550
Phone: 800-277-2119
FAX: 596-868-8760
Web: www.paddelpalace.com
(Panda/Ponial Rubbers)

Distributor: Tibbar Harangozo GmbH (21)
Erwin Berg
Elisabethstr. 62a
D-66127 Saarbruecken
GERMANY
(Tibbar Nets, Rubber, and Tables)

Distributor: Paddle Palace
Judy Hordeof/Michael Boschekisch
7637 SW 23rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97219
Phone: 800-547-5891
Fax: 503-777-4062
Web: www.paddelpalace.com

Yasaka Co. Ltd. (22)
M. Honda
Midoria 3-7-21 Sumida-Ku
Tokyo 130-0021 Japan
Fax: 81-3-3634-5158
E-mail: info@yasaka-jp.com
(Yasaka Balls, Net Sets, Rackets, Rubbers, and Tables)

Distributor: American Table Tennis
Guenther Schroeder
29393 Murray Crescent
Southfield, MI 48076
Phone: 800-825-7664
Fax: 313-356-5871
Web: www.americantabletennis.com

Table Tennis International (23)
Bob and Marry Petry
May 15-Oct. 14
10006 Dededham Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46229-1390
Phone: 317-894-4676
(Oct. 15-May 14)
2203 Field Lane
Bedford, TX 76021-7527
Fax/Phone: 817-868-7664
Email: littleTTL@aol.com
(Winning Rubbers)

Tamas Co. Ltd. (19)
Kimihiko Tamasu
P. O. Box 17
Suginnikou
Tokyo, JAPAN
(Butterfly Balls, Net Sets, Racquets, Rubbers, and Tables)

Distributor: Martin-Kilpatrick
Bowie Martin
4482 Technology Drive
Wilson, NC 27896
Phone: 800-334-8315
Fax: 919-291-8203
Web: www.butterflyonline.com

The Table Tennis Pioneers (20)
Mitchell Rothfleisch
2035 Nadeau, Laval
Quebec, Canada H7T 1W5
Phone: 800-319-7464
Fax: 800-319-7664
Web: www.pingpong.com
(Banda, Dr. Neubauer, Schildkr. Sun Flex, and Stiga Rubbers)

Tibbar Harangozo GmbH (21)

Friendship Balls and Rubbers, Goldway and LKT Rubbers

Zippon PingPong (23)
2778 Stamby Pl
Mount Pleasant, SC 29466
Phone: 843-296-5470
Email: tom@zeropong.com
Web: www.zeropong.com
(Friendship Balls, Rubbers, Goldway and LKT Rubbers)
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- Butterfly Amicus 3000 Plus No.11, 19
- Newgy Robo-Pong Table Tennis Robot No.12

**Balls**
- Andro Speedball 3 Star No.01, 16, 20
- Butterfly 3 Star No.01, 16, 19
- Butterfly 3 Star 4mm No.01, 16, 19
- Butterfly Spin sensation Training No.01, 16, 19
- Double Fish 3 Star No.01, 10
- Double Happiness/DHS 1 Star No.01, 03
- Double Happiness/DHS 2 Star No.01, 03
- Double Happiness/DHS 3 Star No.01, 03
- Double Happiness/DHS Double Circle No.01, 03
- Double Happiness/DHS Super No.01, 03
- Friendship 729 1 Star No.01, 23
- Friendship 729 2 Star No.01, 23
- Friendship 729 3 Star No.01, 23
- JOOLA 3 Star Super No.01, 07, 14
- KS Champion 3 Star (White and orange) No.01, 09
- MK 1 Star No.01, 11
- MK 2 Star No.01, 11
- MK 3 Star No.01, 11
- Nittaku 3 Star Premium No.01, 13, 14
- Spin Tech. 3 Star Elite No.01, 17
- Stiga 1 Star No.01, 05, 14, 20
- Stiga T0620 2 Star No.01, 05, 14, 20
- Stiga T0625 2 Star No.01, 05, 14, 20
- Stiga T0640 3 Star No.01, 05, 14, 20
- Stiga T0641 3 Star No.01, 05, 14, 20
- TSP 3 Star (White and Orange) No.01, 15
- Spin Tech. 3 Star Elite No.01, 17
- KS Champion 3 Star (White and orange) No.01, 09
- MK Deluxe No.01, 12, 14
- TSP 3 Star (White and Orange) No.01, 15
- Friendship 729 3 Star No.01, 23
- Friendship 729 3 Star No.01, 23
- Friendship 729 3 Star No.01, 23
- JOOLA 3 Star Super No.01, 07, 14
- Friendship 729 3 Star No.01, 23

**Rubbers**
- Andro Backside No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Classic No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Dy-6 No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Focus No.01, 16, 20
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- Andro Logo No.01, 16, 20
- Andro T-P2 No.01, 16, 20
- Andro McCorm No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Revolution No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Revolution C.O.R No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Revolution C.O.R. Pipes No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Revolution No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Revolution Clue No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Rocket No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Start No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Trophy No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Upgrade No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Victory No.01, 16, 20
- Andro V.I.P. No.01, 16, 20
- Andro Zenith-G No.01, 16, 20
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- Banda Helix No.01
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- Banda Puma No.01
- Banda Press Soft No.01
- Banda Signature No.01
- Butterfly Addy No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Allround-C4-A002 No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Allround-D13 No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Bryce No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Bryce FX No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Catapult No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Cermet No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Challenger-Attack No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Challenger-Chop No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly D’or No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Ekrips No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Ekrips Soft No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Feint-Long No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Feint-Long II No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Feint-Long III No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Feint-Long III-OX No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Feint-OX No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Feint-Scale No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Flexstorm No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Flextra No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Impartial No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Magnitude No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Maxtrun-Kawa No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Midas No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Moreno No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Orthodox No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Pan Asia No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Raystorm No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Rebull No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Replogle Attack No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Replogle Attack OX No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Resilon No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Resilon Flex No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Resilon Kawa No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Saphira No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Selvid No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Speedy PO No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Speedy PO Soft No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Sirver No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Sirver EL No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Sirver FX No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Sirver G2 No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Sirver G2-FX No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Sirver-Kawa No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Sirver Killer No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Super Star No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Super Anti No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Super Anti-Special No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Super Sliver No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackfire C No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackfire Drive No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackfire Special No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackfire Special Soft No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackiness C No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackiness C Kawa No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackiness No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tackiness D Kawa No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Tempest No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly Wakaba No.01, 11, 19
- Butterfly West Will No.01, 11, 19
- Donic Alpha No.01, 02
- Donic Blues No.01, 02
- Donic Blues Axento No.01, 02
- Donic Blues F5 No.01, 02
- Donic Coppa No.01, 02
- Donic Coppa Tago No.01, 02
- Donic Coppa Tenero No.01, 02
- Donic Desto F1 No.01, 02
- Donic Desto F2 No.01, 02
- Donic Desto F3 No.01, 02
- Donic Gallardo Sonex No.01, 02
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- Donic J. O. Waldner No.01, 02
- Donic Liga No.01, 02
- Donic Quattro A’conda No.01, 02
- Donic Quattro A’conda Medium No.01, 02
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- Donic Solo No.01, 02
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- Donic Song JP No.01, 02
- Donic Song X40 No.01, 02
- Donic Song X45 No.01, 02
- Donic Song X40F No.01, 02
- Donic Song X45F No.01, 02
- Donic Song X40F No.01, 02
- Donic Song X45F No.01, 02

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2006
JOOLA Antispin Long Pips ........No.07, 14
Hallmark Super Defense .....,........No.06. 14
Hallmark Power Spin ....,..............No.06, 14
Hallmark Frustration.....,..............No.06. 14
Friendship RITC 729 Tack Speed.. No.23
Friendship Focus 2........................No.23
Friendship 729 FX (EL) ..........,.,,No.23
Friendship 755 Faster ..................No.23
Friendship 837.
Friendship 802-1.,,.......................No.23
Friendship 563-1..........................No.23
Friendship 799 ...,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 802-1..........................No.23
Friendship 804 No.23
Friendship 837 No.23
Friendship 729-40H ...,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 729 Dr. Evil ...,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 729 SP ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 755 Faster ...,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 729 FX (EL) ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 729 GeoSpin Tacky ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 799 SST ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship Focus 1 ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship Focus 2 ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship Highpoint ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship RITC 729-3 ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship RITC 729 Tack Speed ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship RITC 729-2 ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship RITC 729 ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship RITC 2000 Tackspeed ..,,..,,.............No.23
Friendship 729-40S ..,,..,,.............No.23
Goldway 916 Destroyer ..,,..,,.............No.23
Goldway 968 Stinger ..,,..,,.............No.23
Hallmark Frustration ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
Hallmark HaLong ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
Hallmark Magic Pips ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
Hallmark Original ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
Hallmark Panther ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
Hallmark Power Spin ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
Hallmark Super Defense ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
Hallmark Super Special Extra ..,,..,,.............No.06, 14
JOOLA 4 All ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
JOOLA 4 You ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
JOOLA Air ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
JOOLA Amigo ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
JOOLA Anti-Topspin T Hold ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
JOOLA Antispin Long Pips ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
JOOLA Antispin Soft ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
JOOLA Badman ..,,..,,.............No.07, 14
Juic Spinspiel Ultima....................No.08.14
Juic Varites ........No.08, 14
KS Forza ..,,..,,.............No.09
KS Forza 4z ..,,..,,.............No.09
KS Fury ..,,..,,.............No.09
KS Nitro ..,,..,,.............No.09
KS Nitro 2z ..,,..,,.............No.09
KS Nitro 5z ..,,..,,.............No.09
LKT Pro XP ..,,..,,.............No.23
LKT Pro XT ..,,..,,.............No.23
LKT Recoil ..,,..,,.............No.23
MK M'aze ..,,..,,.............No.11
MK Cyclone ..,,..,,.............No.11
MK Vortex ..,,..,,.............No.12
Newgy Omega ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku C.T. ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Express ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku G885 ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Graffiti ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Hammond ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Hammond Pro Alpha ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Hammond X ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Hurricane II ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Hurricane III ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku J.O. Waldner ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku J.O. Waldner SC ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Magic Carbon ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Magic Spin ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Micro ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Midship ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Midship SC ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Milford ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Moristo ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Moristo 44 ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Moristo 2000 ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Moristo FG ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Moristo LP ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Moristo LP One ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Moristo SP ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Narocross ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Narocross Tension ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Pimple Mini ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Pimple Mini One ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Reforma ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Screw One ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Screw Soft ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Sharking ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Spiral ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Specialist One ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Specialist Soft HS ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Specialist Soft ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Nittaku Tracer ..,,..,,.............No.13, 14
Panda/Panai Force ..,,..,,.............No.15
Panda/Panai Mirage ..,,..,,.............No.15
Panda/Panai Quickspin ..,,..,,.............No.15
Panda/Panai Quickspin/Powerflex ..,,..,,.............No.15
Panda/Panai Spinfactor ..,,..,,.............No.15
Schildkrot Avantgarde 3 Star ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot Champion 5 Star ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot CMax ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot Energy ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot Energy Groove ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot Power Spin ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot Spinmax ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot Tensor Zoom ..,,..,,.............No.20
Schildkrot VMax ..,,..,,.............No.20
Spin Tech. BlackJack ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. BlackJack Ace ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. BlackJack Platinum ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Cyclone ..,,..,,.............No.17
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Spin Tech. Dynamo ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Dynasty Platinum ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Jade ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Konfuze ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Spin Power ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Spin Power SV ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Spin Power Platinum ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Spinsonic ..,,..,,.............No.17
Spin Tech. Stealth ..,,..,,.............No.17
Tournaments Processed
This list was compiled on 04/06 (ages are as of that date) and includes
all tournaments received through 04/06. Due to space limitations,
only current members who have played since 12/12/05 are included. This
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New Tournaments Included in Ratings
Rhode Island Open
MDDTC Butterfly Spring Open
Power Pong Open
Brooklyn TTC Open
Salvation Army/Stiga Spring Open
Golden Western Open
March Open
March Winds Open Giant RR
Alabama State Championships
Front Range Open
Maryland Giant RR
PA Team Tournament
Cary Cup Championship
Spring Open Giant RR
Grand Canyon State Winter Games
Framingham TTC March Open
Quaker City Open & Meldejane Seniors
4th FIT Open TT Championships
Cary Cup Warm-Up Open
Invitational
Atlanta Giant RR
NJTTTC March RR
Maryland Circuit
Killerspin Presents the Arnold U.S. Open Teams TT
Championships
City of Atlanta JRTT League
Harlingen RR & Doubles Open
Missouri Winter Games Open
Brooklyn TTC Open
Rochester NY Giant RR
FL Colossal RR/FL Cup Teams
Hutchinson 2006 Winter Open
February Open
Maryland Giant RR
New Hampshire RR- Open
Spin Classic
Arizona Open
South Eastern Open
Western Open
Long Island Junior Championship
Power Pong Open
NJTTTC February RR
MDDTC Butterfly Winter Open
Chinese New Year Open
Sacramento Winter Open
Brooklyn TTC Open
MDTTC Butterfly Winter Open
Chinese New Year Open
Sacramento Winter Open
MDTTC Butterfly Winter Open
Chinese New Year Open
Sacramento Winter Open
Maryland Circuit
Arkansas Closed
Brooklyn TTC Open
MDTTC Butterfly Winter Open
Chinese New Year Open
Sacramento Winter Open
Maryland Circuit
Arkansas Closed
Brooklyn TTC Open
MDTTC Butterfly Winter Open
Chinese New Year Open
Sacramento Winter Open
Maryland Circuit
Arkansas Closed
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<th>OVER 70 MEN</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 NY 2113 Braithwaite, George</td>
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<td>1 MO 2207 Allen, Kevin</td>
<td>1 VA 1997 Chen, Jonathan</td>
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USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2006
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Johnson, Richard</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>803-589-1234</td>
<td>123 Maple Street, Columbia, SC 29010</td>
<td><a href="mailto:richjohn@snow.com">richjohn@snow.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.richjohn.com">www.richjohn.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Johnson, Robert G.</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>305-555-5555</td>
<td>345 Main Street, Miami, FL 33101</td>
<td><a href="mailto:robertjohn@miami.com">robertjohn@miami.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.robertjohn.com">www.robertjohn.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>Johnson, Steven</td>
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<td>212-123-4567</td>
<td>123 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stevenjohn@ny.com">stevenjohn@ny.com</a></td>
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<td>310-777-7777</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:johnjohn@la.com">johnjohn@la.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>VA</td>
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<td>Richmond</td>
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<tr>
<td>TX</td>
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<td>214-555-5555</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.timjohn.com">www.timjohn.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Johnson, Mike</td>
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<td>303-555-5555</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:mjohn@denver.com">mjohn@denver.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.mjohn.com">www.mjohn.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other States**

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- **GA**: Johnson, John | Atlanta | 404-555-5555 | 123 West Peachtree Street, Atlanta, GA 30303 | johnjohn@atlanta.com | www.johnjohn.com |
- **OH**: Johnson, Mark | Columbus | 614-555-5555 | 123 West Ohio Street, Columbus, OH 43215 | markjohn@columbus.com | www.markjohn.com |
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- **FL**: Johnson, Steve | Orlando | 407-555-5555 | 123 West Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32801 | stevenjohn@orlando.com | www.stevenjohn.com |
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- **TX**: Johnson, Tim | Houston | 713-555-5555 | 123 West Colorado Street, Houston, TX 77002 | timjohn@houston.com | www.timjohn.com |
- **CO**: Johnson, Mike | Denver | 303-555-5555 | 123 West Colfax Avenue, Denver, CO 80218 | mjohn@denver.com | www.mjohn.com |

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**Contact Information**

- **Telephone**: 800-547-5891
- **Email**: info@paddlepalace.com
- **Website**: www.paddlepalace.com

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**Sports Club**

- **Location**: 123 West Street, Suite 100, City, State 12345
- **Phone**: 555-555-5555
- **Website**: www.ourclub.com
May 6-7 - Butterfiy San Diego Open, San Diego, CA. Contact:

207-782-7018 rsheca@auburnschl.edu. **

May 6-7 - Irving RR, Irving, TX. Contact: Gary Milton Wiederhold, 214-491-8789. gary@irvingttc.com. ★

May 7 - Power Pong Open, Fountain Valley, CA. Contact: Attila Malek, 714-540-5162. powerpong@aol.com. ★

June 6-7 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

June 6-7 - Missouri Open, St. Joseph Valley Open, Oregon, OR. Contact: Ken Ping, 503-645-2382. kumith@yahoo.com. ★

June 7-8 - 2006 New Jersey Open on the Stiga N.A. Tour, Piscataway, NJ. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. info@natabletennis.com. ★★★

July 1-2 - 1st Annual Chris Everett Children’s Hospital US Open Warm-Up, Coral Springs, FL. Contact: Terese Terranova, 954-963-5880. terese126@hotmail.com. ★★★

July 5-8 - U.S. Open, Charlotte, NC. Contact: Joyce Grooms, 719-866-4983 ext. 5. admin@usatt.org. ★★★

June 2-3 - MDITTC Butterfly June Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 202-414-8128. weixia042@hotmail.com. ★

June 4 - Ben Hill/Stiga Open, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Ralph Presley, 404-344-4728. ramps presley@aol.com. 0 Star

June 9 - Framingham TTC July Open, Framingham, MA. Contact: Qiumars Hedayatian, 617-669-5585. contact@masssttc.com. 0 Star

July 8-9 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

July 16 - Sportfest X 2 Player Team & Top Gun Singles Open, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred Kistler, 610-797-6637. lvttc@yahoo.com. ★

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


July 28-30 - 2006 AAU Junior Olympics, Hampton Roads, VA. Contact: North American Table Tennis, 301-738-8250. info@natabletennis.com. ★★★

July 29 - Waco 2006 Summer RR, Waco, TX. Contact: Grady Gordon, 254-772-2838. ggordon@grandecom.net. 0 Star

July 30-31 - Summer 2006 Broward TT Open, Davie, FL. Contact: Carlos Zeller, 954-962-8833. czelly962@gmail.com. ★★★

August 4-5 - Central FL Summer Open 2006, Lakeland, FL. Contact: Raymond Spann, 863-965-0760. rayspann@verizon.net. ★★★
"Failure is not an option. Everyone has to succeed." (Arnold Schwarzenegger)

If you're like most competitive players, your travels to table tennis events are just that, trips to tournaments with other table tennis enthusiasts and with limited friends or family members in attendance, playing for trophies or minimal cash awards. And then going home - kind of a disconnect from your normal balanced life until now.

Well, with the help of many volunteers and Jim Lorimer, co-producer of The Arnold Fitness Weekend, Killerspin successfully created a Table Tennis Festival out of a "normal" table tennis tournament on March 3, 4, 5. Being a part of the three-day Fitness Expo at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio was an honor for table tennis and for Killerspin. Years ago, Henry Ford appropriately said, "My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me." Our new best friends are Arnold Schwarzenegger, Lorimer, and Lorimer's staff as they brought out the best in all of us.

As Lorimer declares: "The Arnold Fitness Weekend is more than an event. It's an experience. This is the premier destination for the world's greatest bodybuilders and fitness competitors. But it also is fast becoming a forum of choice for many of the world's best athletes. Arnold Schwarzenegger showed that fitness is fun; you could see that each time he goes on stage as a competitor. Today, the Arnold Fitness Weekend is the ultimate expression of the many ways in which fitness is fun!"

The highlight of the Arnold table tennis experience was the ESPN TV Invitational Matches. On Thursday morning, March 2, balloon number four was an empty, carpeted ballroom. By 8 AM on Saturday, March 4, balloon number four was a fully functional ESPN TV studio complete with flooring, lighting, sound equipment, cameras, barriers, audience seating, and a myriad of cables and wires connecting it to the ESPN trailer parked outside. Francois Charvet and his Ohio State University team of volunteers were instrumental in creating this new table tennis court for television (more on the volunteers later). The four feature events were: The Women's Invitational Championships; The U.S. Men's Invitational Championships; The International Men's Invitational Matches; and the Table Tennis Exhibition Match between 1988 Olympic Silver Medalists in Doubles. Ilija Lupulesku and Zoran Primorac.

In the Women's Invitational Championship first round action (TV only allowed for these matches to be the best of three games), Elie defeated Laura Xiao, 2 games to 0. Biba won over Yanna by the same game score. Laura is a newly sponsored Killerspin player with a desire to impress by training overseas. Yanna, also new to Killerspin, recently restarted her table tennis training and plans to help her native country, Greece, in the upcoming Women's League Competition. In the Women's Final, Biba overwhelmed Elie's grace and desire to win in two close games.

The U.S. Men's Invitational Championship featured three members of the 2006 U.S. Men's Team representing the World Championships in Germany next month. Mark Hazinski (#2 U.S. team member) beat Arturo Shiu 2-1 in the first semifinal. Shiu, a left-handed penholder serve and attack specialist, was born and trained in Panama. In the other semifinal, Adam Hugh (#3 U.S. team member) narrowly defeated Barney J. Reed (#4 U.S. team member), 2-1. Hazinski took out Hugh in the final, 2-1. This was an interesting match-up of the forehand and backhand power of Hazinski against the grit and determination of Hugh. Just when one thought the point was over, Hugh would athleticism run down the ball, quickly plant his feet, and counter-spin deep to handcuff Hazinski.

The International Invitational matches saw Thomas Keinath of Germany defeat both Aleksandar Karakasevic (Serbia) and Thiago Monteiro, the current Champion of Brazil, 3-2. Keinath's effective service game coupled with his control of his opponents' opening shots enabled him to closely win both matches. Andrei Filimon of Romania elevated his game since losing to Ilija Lupulesku in last year's Mohegan Sun Event in Connecticut and rather handily defeated Lupulesku 3-1. Filimon also beat Zoran Primorac and during the match Filimon made an amazing around-the-net loop kill with his left hand (he is right-handed). Filimon's physical strength was evident as a ball literally exploded when he loop-killed a forehand. Filimon has been known to complete...
Two more International Invitation matches were played, Karakasevic winning 3-2 over Primorac, and the outstanding exhibition match between Primorac and Lupulesku. This exhibition match demonstrated the shot-making and humor of both these world-class athletes. But it did more that – much more! A table tennis player with 30 years experience was overheard saying that he saw amazing shots he had never seen before. Left-hander Lupulesku was forehand looping to Primorac, when after about seven power loops, Primorac countered to Lupulesku's backhand catching him off balance and facing away from the table. Lupulesku, with his back to the table, hit a backhand overhead kill shot for a winner! The entire audience stood up and exploded with applause – even the other International players were shaking their heads in disbelief. Primorac looked at the umpire and put up two fingers to indicate that he thought the shot was worth two points whereas the umpire complied.

More entertaining and skillful shots were in order with these two long-time teammates and competitors going at it. In one rally, each player went from striking the ball lengthwise to the table (normal manner) to hitting the ball from each side (90 degrees to the table) to actually standing on the wrong side of the table and putting the ball on the side closest to them – the correct side to hit but with each player having changed ends! Primorac also had his fun with the umpire. During one point, he tried to return a ball veering sharply off the side of the table but the umpire table was in the way. He promptly moved the table out of the court revealing on the floor: a towel for wiping down the table, empty ball boxes, and the umpire's water bottle. He was yellow carded for umpire abuse and the umpire table was returned to its proper location. The umpire later stated that he felt as if he were in a public restroom and someone accidentally opened the stall door on him!

To view the entire Killerspin Presents the Arnold Table Tennis Challenge ESPN TV Event, please stay tuned to www.killerspin.com for the airing times. The times will also be listed on the two major table tennis chat rooms and on www.usatt.org. DVDs will also be on sale in the summer.

Similar to last December's Killerspin Festival in Chicago, table tennis play included competition for everyone with Michael Jordan's quote in mind, "Just play: Have fun. Enjoy the game." On Friday, recreational championships were held for players that have never competed in a sanctioned tournament. Twenty-five participants new to the organized game of table tennis received tournament t-shirts, new Killerspin rackets and won medals in several age groups with many of them becoming members of the USATT. On Saturday, over 130 players played in six rated events, in an unrated event, and in the ever more popular Point Handicap event. In the Handicap final 1584 rated Sharath Adengada defeated 1210 rated Dave Fulken 41 to 39 to take the $200 first prize money. Part of the appeal of the handicap event appears to be that nearly every player, when queried, will claim they are underrated and therefore are favored to win.

In the rated singles events Soren Tannehill, local Columbus player and son of the great 1970's U.S. Men's Team Member John Tannehill, was a one-man highlight reel. Soren, rated 1774, lost deuce in the fifth to 2006 rated Ivan Popov of Michigan in the under 2300 event, won his round robin group in the under 2050 event only to lose deuce in the fifth in the quarters of the 2050, and then won the under 1800 championship against Mike Nowicki of Chicago, IL. by the unlikely scores of 7, 8, 8, 1, and 8. Nowicki outscored Soren 34 points to 33 points but lost the match!

On Sunday, the fun continued with the Junior Events, the Parent-Child Doubles Challenge and the highly successful College 3-Person Team Tournament. The Under 18-year-old Event was won by Michigan's Bence Toth over Brian Selking. The most exciting junior event was Under 14, where the boys' and girls' events were combined to create a big round robin group. With a large number of matches watched by parents and many Arnold Festival onlookers, the intensity grew until the top-rated boy Chris Holly met the unrated girl Marie Pierre Cossid in the battle of the unbeatens.

Ms. Cossid escaped with a hard-fought deuce-in-the-fifth win to capture the combined Under 14 Championship. I think she fared better than her nail-biting supporters! Young Cossid earlier had teamed with her father to take second place in the Parent-Child Doubles Event to the Champions, Simon and Bence Toth.

The College Team Tournament consisted of 14 teams from Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Kentucky. For many of these students and primarily recreational players, it was their first taste of a large tournament and they had fun competing in the new five matches per round team format (one team member plays two singles matches, and two members play one singles match each and team up for one doubles match, for a total of five points per round). Ohio State University (OSU) 'A' Team easily took first place and the Killerspin RAD table with OSU 'B' Team taking second. Their team captain was Francois Charvet with team members Michael Yao and Xiaodong Zhou. OSU 'B' team won Killerspin equipment bags and later tried to claim they let OSU 'A' team win because their club won the table and the 'B' team also won the bags! The University of Kentucky (UK) 'A' won the consolation prize over UK 'B'.

The event director Molly and I want to express huge props and a hearty thank you to Frank Charvet (and his wonderful wife, Sam), Doug Hurak, and Matt Hurak for the tireless hours they and their 25 OSU volunteers spent making this festival a success. The event received unbelievable support with each and every top player being provided friendly transportation to and from the airport and hotel. Also thanks to Steve Slaback and Charles Hill for their expertise and assistance. As a hint to all future directors, it helps to have a doctoral student in logistics, organizational management, and business, on board (Charvet) locally when producing such an event. It also helped, when over the course of the weekend, more than 150,000 spectators visited the Arnold Fitness Weekend with 14,000 athletes competing in 30 separate events ranging from gymnastics to martial arts to weightlifting. And remember, if you missed this year's fitness expo, he'll be back...
Board Motions & Votes

Email Votes, January, 2006

Motion One: Move to approve USATT League Service Agreement.

Motion by Sheri Pittman; Second by Tong Lee
Motion Passed: 8-0-0-4
In Favor: Tim B, George B, Dell S, Sherry P, Khoa N, Jiing W, Tong L, Whitney P
Against: None; Abstain: None; No Vote: Robert B, Ashu J, Lily Y, Barney R

Email Votes, February, 2006

Motion One: Move to approve the Minutes of the September 23-24, 2005 Board of Directors Meeting.

Motion by Tim Boggan; Second by Sheri Pittman
Motion Passed: 11-1-0-0
Against: Tong L (Note- “I disapprove because there were two different versions of a statement made by the accountant, and I believe that at least one version be included, but both were left out.”);
Abstain: None; No Vote: None

Motion Two: Moved to nominate Tim Bogbean and Bob Fox as USATT’s delegates to the 2006 ITTF’s Annual General Meeting to be held in Bremen.

Motion by Sheri Pittman; Second by Khoa Nguyen
Motion Passed: 8-0-1-3
Against: None; Abstain: Tim B; No Vote: Barney R, Jiing W, Lily Y

Motion Three: Move to appoint Joseph Wells to serve as the Community Based Programs Representative per Chapter VIII. Section 5E, of the Bylaws.

Motion by Sheri Pittman; Second by Khoa Nguyen
Motion Passed: 8-0-1-3
In Favor: Tim B, Robert B, Dell S, Sherry P, Khoa N, Tong L, Ashu J, George B
Against: Tong L (Note- “I disapprove because there were two different versions of a statement made by the accountant, and I believe that at least one version be included, but both were left out.”);
Abstain: None; No Vote: None

Motion Four: Move to approve the Minutes of the November 11-12, 2005 Board of Directors Meeting.

Motion by Tim Boggan, Second by Sheri Pittman
Motion Passed: 7-0-2-4
In Favor: Dell S, Tim B, Tong L, Sherry P, Khoa N, Whitney P, Lily Y
Against: None; Abstain: Ashu J, Joseph W; No Vote: Robert B, Jiing W, George B, Barney R

Aly Salam Suspended

Aly Salam has been suspended from USATT and all USATT activities for a period of six months, beginning March 4, 2006. This is the result of having been found guilty of the following misconduct during and after his conducting an ITTF Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) election at the 2005 World Championships in Shanghai:

1. Collecting the paper ballots from the eight URC members during the election, turning his back to the group, opening the votes for the two candidates, then destroying the ballots without letting anyone else see them, and then falsely announcing that Albert Rooijmans was the winning candidate.

2. After becoming aware that the URC members had subsequently discussed their votes and found out the vote was actually a 4-4 tie, asking Fernando Aguilar to lie in Mr. Salam’s favor in regard to what Mr. Aguilar had told the other URC members in the subsequent discussion of their votes, so Mr. Salam could say that he was correct in counting a 5-3 win for Mr. Rooijmans instead of a 4-4 tie.
Europe Top Twelve
Copenhagen, DEN • Feb. 4-5, 2006

19th Grand Prix Asian Cup
Kobe, JPN • Mar. 3-5, 2006

Women's Singles - Final: Wang Hao (CHN) d. Chen Qi (CHN), 4-2, 2-1
SF: Wang d. Kano Yoshida (JPN), 6-2, 1-0
QF: Wang d. Lin Ling (HKG), 4-2, 4-0

Women's Preliminaries:
Group A: 1st Tamara Boros (HRV), 2-1 (d. Zhao, 2-0, 1-2)
2nd Nicoleta Stefanova (ITA), 2-1 (d. Zhao, 1-2, 2-0)
3rd Li Jiao (NED), 2-0 (d. Zhao, 1-2, 2-0)
Group B: 1st Li Jiao (NED), 2-1 (d. Zhao, 2-0, 1-2)
2nd Nicoleta Stefanova (ITA), 2-1 (d. Zhao, 1-2, 2-0)
3rd Li Jiao (NED), 2-0 (d. Zhao, 1-2, 2-0)

Women's Doubles - Final: Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Li Jiao (NED), 1-0, 2-0
SF: Zhang d. Lin Ling (HKG), 4-2, 4-0
QF: Zhang d. Lin Ling (HKG), 4-2, 4-0

Women's Preliminaries:
Group A: 1st Tamara Boros (HRV), 1-3 (d. Zhao, 2-0, 1-2)
2nd Nicoleta Stefanova (ITA), 1-3 (d. Zhao, 1-2, 2-0)
3rd Li Jiao (NED), 1-3 (d. Zhao, 1-2, 2-0)

Women's Doubles - Final: Zhang Yining (CHN) d. Li Jiao (NED), 1-0, 2-0
SF: Zhang d. Lin Ling (HKG), 4-2, 4-0
QF: Zhang d. Lin Ling (HKG), 4-2, 4-0
Western Open on the Stiga North American Tour

Recreational Sports Facility, University of California Berkeley, CA • Feb. 3-5, 2006 • by Alan Williams

The 2006 STIGA North American Tour was launched in magnificent fashion at the Western Open. The tournament was filled to capacity with 274 impassioned participants, was assisted by a slew of volunteers, and the play was inspired and enthusiastic. The San Francisco Bay area glows with table tennis coaches, clubs, leagues and organizers and their participation made the Western Open one of the most exciting tournaments I have ever worked. Media was also more responsive than usual, a clear indication that this region is working up a “full head of steam” in promoting the sport we love.

Lily Yip operated the vendor booth on behalf of the Tour sponsor, Table Tennis Pioneers, with a full selection of STIGA products. Dr. Azmy Ibrahim, the Tournament Referee, assembled a distinguished group of certified umpires for the Western Open, including Tom Miller, Kenny Tien, Irina Hellwig and Mike Boot. Tournament Director Fong Hsu completed the player database and made the draws, and despite only getting access to the hall at 9 PM on Friday, the Berkeley volunteers worked like pyramid-builders in getting the tournament to the floor.

We were rewarded for these efforts with outstanding performances by our entrants! In the Ying-Lo Junior Competitions, Eric Shahnazari captured the Under 10 Boys’ title in head-to-head seven-game combat with the tournament’s youngest player, Ethan Chu (8), and then came second to Brian Chen in the Under 13. Sean C. Lee served notice that he is not to be taken lightly, winning the Under 16 over David Chow and finishing second to Misha Kazantzsev in the Under 18 category, even taking a 3-2 game lead against the famous junior. Guo Xi wrestled the Under 22 title away from Auria Malek, who deserves some sort of Iron Man award for his near continuous play.

Lily Zhang bested Sylvan Guo in five games for Girls’ Under 10 honors, although Sylvan got her first place thrills in the U-1400 anyway. Katie Poon edged out Jessica Yick in the Under 18 Women and we got a preview of the Women’s Final when Shu Fu met Jackie Lee in the Under 22 Women’s.

The Sol Feingold Memorial Senior events were just as competitive, Michael Greene downing Zhao Mao Lin in Over 60 play, David Sakai getting the better of Mark Johnson in Over 50’s and a fine match in the Over 40 capping our senior play. Team 1 defeated Lily Yip 9.9.10.8.9!

There was strength and evenly matched play through the ratings events. In the U-2250 category, Nelson Yu fought to a win over the relentless Elie Zainabudilova, 8.4.6.2.10.11.11! No easy way to lay claim to the U-2375 money either, as Auria Malek toughed it out against the steady Shashin Shoobian in a very dramatic Final, -9.4.4.9.9.11.11.

While Freddie Gabriel managed to make his U-2500 over Sanison Dubina a five gamer, at 8.8.8.6.8, it was no walk in the park either. Sumson worked like pyramid-builders in getting the tournament to the floor.

There is now a policy of advancing additional qualifiers if, for any reason, seeded players withdraw or fail to show at this stage. Ben Johnson, the seeds, along with Judy Hugh, the “Lucky Loser” and Peter Zajic, the seeds, along with Judy Hugh, the “Lucky Loser” and fifth place qualifier replacing Johnson.

None of which made any difference to Stefan! Kevin Au managed a deuce game with the defending Western Open champ, but it was otherwise smooth sailing as Feth went 16-0, 4-0 to win the group and advance to Sunday’s quarterfinals. Things were more complicated for our other players. Peter Zajic was upset by both Kevin Au, 4-3 (-6.7.8,4.9.4) and in straight games by Judy Hugh (10.7.11.11). Judy then took control of her own fate by defeating Kevin 4-2 (-6.8.8.6.9) and finishing second with a 2-1 record. She became one of the few non-seeds to make our SE Round and the first “Lucky Loser” to do so!

Open Singles

Group One: Feth, Zajac, Hugh, Au

In the NATT scheme of things, the Top 12 players are seeded out of Open Singles Qualifying rounds and, joined by four qualifiers, play in four Round Robin groups of four each with two players advancing. There is now a policy of advancing additional qualifiers if, for any reason, seeded players withdraw or fail to show at this stage. Ben Johnson, coping with a massive East Coast storm, had only managed to get to Los Angeles. However, his luggage, including hisackets, did not. This in our first group, we see Kevin Au, the Qualifier, joining Stefan Feth and Peter Zajac, the seeds, along with Judy Hugh, the “Lucky Loser” and fifth place qualifier replacing Johnson.

None of which made any difference to Stefan! Kevin Au managed a deuce game with the defending Western Open champ, but it was otherwise smooth sailing as Feth went 16-0, 4-0 to win the group and advance to Sunday’s quarterfinals. Things were more complicated for our other players. Peter Zajic was upset by both Kevin Au, 4-3 (-6.7.8,4.9.4) and in straight games by Judy Hugh (10.7.11.11). Judy then took control of her own fate by defeating Kevin 4-2 (-6.8.8.6.9) and finishing second with a 2-1 record. She became one of the few non-seeds to make our SE Round and the first “Lucky Loser” to do so!

Group Two: Nguyen, Dubina, Yip, Schmidt

Khoo Nguyen and Lily Yip are tied at two games apiece when Khoo asserts himself and takes the fifth and sixth games, 8 and 6. Avishy manages a game from Khoo as well, but goes down 5.9.7.6.4. Samson also beats the C and D players, defeating Lily in straight games, 7.12.6.6 and Avishy in five, 9.8.13.2.2. Lily and Avishy take one look at each other, elect not to play their now meaningless match, a double default. So Khoo and Samson both come through, and the question remaining is which is seeded first and which is seeded second. Samson pulls off a major “is that right? Did he do that?” upset of the San Jose star by scores of 9.8.13.7.5.8.7, coming back from 2-1 and 3-2 game deficits! Dubina gets the better of the quarterfinal draw positions as a result and a lot of congratulations.

Group Three: Owens, Gabriel, Lu, Kazantsev

The most surprising outcome of any of our groups in quite hilarious. Not a tremendous surprise, just a great effort by Freddie Gabriel in coming in first place. He defeated Misha 4-2, and Lu Guo Hui 4-1, which takes some doing. Then he made it a clean sweep of the group by upsetting the top-seeded Eric Owens, 8.8.8.7.8.8.9. Eric’s troubles were not over, however! Although he beat Lu in four straight games, 4.5.5.4, Eric soon had his hands full of Misha Kazantzsev. Misha is traditionally a slow starter, not trying to accomplish too much in the opening minutes, and dropped game one, 11-2, but takes the next two, 15-13 and 11-7. Eric is real fighter, and 11-7 evens the match only to go down again 11-7 and trails three games to two. The crowd is heavily Californian, but Eric has his posse too. 11-4 he looks to have run it, but...in the end it’s Misha, 12-10 in the seventh game of a real barnburner. But Lu had defeated Misha, and that leaves everyone but Freddie tied with records of 1-2. Thanks to his straight game win over Lu, Eric squeaks out of this dangerous group as the #2 seed for a quarterfinal berth.

Group Four: Kamkar-Parsi, Gombos, Lee, Malek

Homayoun had to scramble to make his group, travel problems having trapped him in Philadelphia. Having arrived, however, he hands a loss to Jackie Lee, four games to two, 4.4.10.-10.6.8. Second seed...
Quarterfinals
Stefan Feth vs. Auria Malek

And this is Malek’s reward for all that excellent play on Saturday, to face the defending Western Open Champion in the quarters. “Auria’s got a nice game,” Stefan said afterward. “but sometimes he tries too hard, always looking for the big shot. He should relax and change speeds a little more.” Stefan advances to the semifinals, 5,7,9,7.

Khoa Nguyen vs. Freddie Gabriel

Freddie played great in his Round robin, while Khoa had that disappointing loss to Sanison. So how would this pairing turn out? We’ll find out.

Semifinals
Stefan Feth vs. Eric Owens

No one would have faulted this match as the Championship match, but it is “only” a Semi. Freddie is playing strongly, and it shows here. Stefan, a former German National Men’s Singles semifinalist, is “retired” from International play and moving to the Bay area, but is still clearly a 2700 level player. Freddie’s excellent service game does not embarrass him here, and they are tied after two, Gabriel winning the second game, 11-6. Not many in this country can nick Stefan for a game, but a game is all Freddie gets, as Stefan advances in his title defense, 8,6,4,5,5.

Eric Owens vs. Samson Dubina

Samson already has that upset win over Khoa and a full head of steam. Eric has the experience of International and top-rank competition. Plus it seems the entire female contingent of the USC club has become a force! Always a gentleman, well-mannered and cheerful, we are all enriched by his presence.

Final
Stefan Feth vs. Eric Owens

Umpire Tom Miller presides and the aisles are packed to see these two top-rated players compete for the Title. The winner gets $1500, the runner-up has a $700 payday, but the motivation is in place! But all the heart in the world (11-8) is no substitute for true skill level (11-6). All the desire on the planet (11-6) cannot substitute for world-class skill and conditioning. Leading 10-7 in the fourth game, Stefan gets a net, a ball that springs up, down, hits the table and falls to the side, next to the net post. Eric, in a flat-out, give-it-your-all effort, goes to the floor and makes an amazing return, a good return, but Stefan swats it away down the centerline into the unoccupied backcourt for a straight-game win. Eric just can’t buy a break.

There is no disgrace in having lost and every reason to praise Stefan Feth, King of the Western Open. Stefan, as a growing number of USATT members are learning, is not just a tremendous player, but a tremendous person as well! Always a gentleman, well-mannered and cheerful, we are fortunate to have Stefan in our ranks and very pleased that he has chosen so frequently to participate in NATT events. Now that he has decided to make his home here in the United States, we are all enriched by his presence.

 Hats off also to the Cal volunteers, Yuntao Zhou (Club President), Matthew Ma, Kyle Perry, Grace Ma, Michael Blum, Haoyu Zheng, Ryan Hu, Deborah Leong and Lucas Siew who assisted with the tournament setup, and Kenny Schang, Minh-Chau Nguyen, Erik Tsou, Allison Seibeh, Yuntao Zhou and Ione Chan who assisted with the cleanup. Special thanks to Mark Hikin of the Recreational Sports Facility for his help throughout the tournament.

Open Singles – Final: Stefan Feth d. Eric Owens, 8,6,6,7; SF: Feth d. Freddie Gabriel, 8,6,4,5,5; Owens d. Samson Dubina, 8,6,8,7; QF: Feth d. Auria Malek, 5,7,9,7; Gabriel d. Khoa Nguyen, def.; Owens d. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi, 9,7,8,5,8; Dubina d. Judy Hugh, 11,9,13,4,4.

Women: 1st Sara Fu, 2nd Jacqueline Lee.
U2500: 1st Freddie Gabriel, 2nd Dubina.
U2125: 1st Wei-Sung Tsao, 2nd Joey Juan-Yuan Hu.
U2000: 1st Johnny Huang, 2nd Jaime A. Molgarro Muzon.
U1850: 1st Gary Fang, 2nd Praful Bhaidastia.
U1700: 1st Jessica Yick, 2nd Gan Wah Lee.
U1550: 1st Do Van Tran, 2nd Mike Labins.
U1400: 1st Sylvan Guo, 2nd Adam Banghart.
U1250: 1st Gabriel Reder, 2nd Victor Kretov.
U1100: 1st Jennifer Wang, 2nd Ryan Hu.
U800/Unrated: 1st Hoang Nguyen, 2nd Alex Tuo.

Open Doubles: 1st Ludovic Gombos Eric Owens; 2nd Freddie Gabriel Trevor Runyan.
U4200 Doubles: 1st Shing-Li Sung/Bruce Liu, 2nd Joey Juan-Yuan Hu/Nelson Yu.
U3200 Doubles: 1st Gary Baetoo David Hansor, 2nd David Smith/William Lyons.

Feingold Memorial Senior Events
Over 40: 1st Tuan Dai Le, 2nd Lily Yip.
Over 50: 1st David Sakai, 2nd Mark Johnson.
Over 60: 1st Michael Greene, 2nd Mao Lin Zhao.

Ying/Lo Junior Competitions
Under 22 Men: 1st Xi Guo; 2nd Auria Malek.
Under 22 Women: 1st Sara Fu, 2nd Jacqueline Lee.
Under 18 Boys: 1st Misha Kazantsev; 2nd C.C. Lee.
Under 18 Girls: 1st Katie Poon; 2nd Jesica Yick.
Under 13 Boys: 1st Brian Chen; 2nd Erick Shahrnazari.
Under 10 Boys: 1st Erick Shahrnazari, 2nd Ethan Chua.
Pennsylvania Open Teams
State College, PA • Mar. 18-19, 2006
By Sam Steiner

This was a classic three-on-three type team tournament played over two days at the main campus of Penn State University. Penn State offers table tennis as a for-credit gym elective class that enrolls around 50-60 students per semester. Students must pass written tests, join USATT, and participate in at least one sanctioned tournament to pass the course. Program Director Hank McCoullum deserves a lot of credit for putting the program together and also for securing the use of the gym for this tournament.

A total of 124 players competed in six divisions for $2000 in cash and trophies. In the ‘E’ Division, Penn State team #13 came out of nowhere to take first place. Who rated these guys anyway? Class ‘E’ was more straightforward with Penn State 6 scoring a mild upset over Penn State 5 to win.

In the ‘D’ Division two undefeated teams met in the final, where Penn State 2 eked out a 5-4 win over the Nanticoke Coal Crackers.

Both ‘C’ and ‘B’ groups had a lot of closely-rated teams, meaning several long and tense match-ups. In ‘C,’ Ron Arcaro’s Northeast Ohio team survived several close matches to capture first over the top-seeded Buffalo Blasters. In ‘B,’ South Park 3 (Pittsburgh) dominated for first place while three teams beat each other up for second. When the dust settled it was Gaithersburg capturing second over Penn State Penhold by a single match.

The ‘A’ group promised a tight final between the Dan Seemiller-coached South Bend Juniors, and Dan’s alma mater South Park 1. Also of interest was the occasional play of Christoph Teille, rated 2260, who plays a bizarre game of short pips rolls, blocks, and counters with an occasional fast loop. Christoph moved to Pennsylvania from Germany last year and is employed as a Lutheran minister in the Allentown area so he can’t attend tournaments on a regular basis.

In the opening round robin, he competed here Saturday and Sunday afternoons and managed to dazzle and confuse Chip Coulter and Mike Walk before Randy Seemiller came out gunning to hand Christoph his only loss of the tournament.

In the final match between South Bend and South Park, the South Bend juniors came out smoking (figuratively!) and jumped to a shocking 4-1 lead over the ex-juniors when Joe Cochran downed Randy Seemiller 3-0. But South Park was down but not out. Chip Coulter engineered a methodical 3-1 win over Cochran leading to a ninth match meeting between Mike Walk and Dan Seemiller Jr. Dan tried hard but this time around was outmatched and South Park took home the gold.

Jasna Wins in Jamaica
Rams Best Female Player Conquers All in Kingston
Kingston, Jamaica • Feb. 11, 2006 • By Michael Meier

Living up to her No. 1 ranking in the tournament, Texas Wesleyan master’s student Jasna Reed defeated everyone in her path to win the Class A Singles title at the Jamaica Texas Wesleyan University Spring Open, Feb.11 in Kingston, Jamaica. She also cruised to the Women’s Open Singles title as well.

Not only did the tournament field include Rams’ varsity members senior Courtney Roberts and junior Dinko Kranjac, but also the top 20 players in Jamaica. Three of these competitors (Gavin Hylton, Nigel Webb and Darryl Strachan) will represent Jamaica next month at the Commonwealth Games in Australia.

Jasna beat Strachan 4-0 in the final, 8,11,6,8, though it was her tenth match of the day. “Strachan is a great player, but Jasna was strategically amazing,” said Texas Wesleyan Coach Keith Evans. “I think Strachan came in with a solid game plan, but Jasna simply knocked it down and he never recovered.”

In the semifinals Jasna defeated Hylton 4-3 (7-9,5,10,6,12,5). Prior to that, she won over Roberts 4-2 in the quarterfinals (9,7,3,2,7,8), and knocked off No. 1 Jamaican Ludlow Bailey. 3-2 (10,9,2,5,9) in the round of sixteen. Before that Jasna cruised to a 3-0 record in her opening round robin.

Championships Results – Final: Jasna Reed d. Darryl Strachan, 8,11,6,8. SF: Reed d. Gavin Hylton, -7,9,5,10,12,5; Strachan d. Kane Watson, 9,8,13,8. QF: Reed d. Courtney Roberts, 9,7,3,2,7,8; Strachan d. Nigel Webb, 9,8,8,6. Hylton d. Joseph Diggs, 6,10,7,6,12,4; Watson d. Dinko Kranjac, 9,8,5,1-1,7,7.
Butterfly MDTTC February Open

Gaithersburg, MD • Feb. 11-12, 2006
By Wei Xiao

The 2006 Butterfly MDTTC Winter Open took place at Maryland Table Tennis Center, Feb. 11-12. Due to the winter storm that blew out most of the Mid-Atlantic Region that weekend, lots of players had to withdraw from Sunday’s events but the tournament was still held and ran successfully with about 50 entries.

In the Open event, there were three groups. Butterfly’s Han Xiao was seeded out. In Group One, Anu, Amares Sahu (2257) beat 2165 penholder blocker Lixin Lang in five games, and both advanced to the playoffs. An upset happened in Group Two, where 2175-rated Reza Ghiassi was defeated 3-2 by another local junior, Charlie Sun (1919). But Reza fought hard to upset the top-seeded Vitaliy Deyak from Ukraine to advance to the playoffs. In Group Three, Raghu Nadmichettu (2226) beat Peter Li (2228) and both advanced. In the Quarters, Raghu continued his good performance to beat Lixin Lang. Coached by Cheng Yingliua, Peter Li fight back to beat Vitaliy 3-1, and Amares beat Reza 3-2. The two semifinals were between two college students, Han and Raghu, and two junior players, Peter and Amares. Han had to do a little homework to find the way to beat Raghu (-9,11,1,-11,4,7). Amares beat Peter at the 2005 Nationals Cadet Team Trials on his way to making the USA cadet team for the first time. But this time, his consistent defense was not enough to overcome Peter’s offense, and he lost 4-1. Han beat Peter Li 4-0 in the final.

In the Under 2250 event Vitaliy played well and made many unbelievable shots to beat Lixin Lang in the semifinals and then Raghu in the final to win the event. The Under 2100 event was dominated by local juniors. In the final, third-seeded Kian Mokhtari beat top-seed Kevin Ma, 3-0. In the Under 1950’s, local dentist Samuel Huang easily won the event with his tricky shots and a variety of serves.

On Sunday, the tournament director had to combine some events together since the roughly one foot snow accumulation overnight blocked many players from the tournament. Carson Truong, rated 1107, was the only person who won two trophies on Sunday, winning the Under 1150 event and runner-up in the Under 1650 event.

Open - Final: Han Xiao d. Peter Li, 11,7,10,5; SF: Xiao d. Raghu Nadmichettu, -9,11,1,-11,4,7; Li d. Amares Sahu, 9,-9,5,10; QF: Nadmichettu d. Lixin Lang, 6,8,7,8; Li d. Vitaliy Deyak, 6,8,-11,5; Sahu d. Reza Ghiassi, 12,8,-9,7,4; Xiao - Bye.
U2250 - Final: Vitaliy Deyak d. Raghu Nadmichettu, 10,8,10; SF: Deyak d. Lixin Lang, 8,8,4,9; Nadmichettu d. Peter Li, 6,14,8.
U2100 - Final: Kian Mokhtari d. Kevin Ma, 3,3,5; SF: Mokhtari d. Hye Won Kim, 6,2,5,8,5; Ma d. Charlie Sun, 7,5,9.
U1950: Samuel Huang d. Vancal Rema, 6,8,-8,7.
U1900: 1st Mohamed Karara; 2nd Eduardo Urbina.
U1650: Caleb Fan d. Carson Truong, -9,9,7,7.
U1400: 1st Daniel Kovov; 2nd Benjamin Huang.
U1150: 1st Carson Truong; 2nd Varvara Zemskova.

All other Sunday’s events were combined with no playoffs due to the storm weather.

Long Island Junior Championships

Long Island, NY • Feb. 18, 2006
By Jerry Mintz

The Grenville Baker Boys and Girls Club hosted its third tournament on Feb. 18, the Long Island Open Junior Championships. The club now has 48 members who have had had USATT membership numbers, 32 of whom are current club members.

As has been described in part articles, the Grenville Baker Table Tennis club runs as a democracy, with Coach Jerry Mintz coming in twice a week for two hours. The rest of the week the table tennis is run by elected student supervisors. In fact, the registration tables were manned by students. One incident that was overheard: a late at-rival registered, "Is that your lunch money? If that’s your lunch money we don’t want it!"

If you are interested in organizing a similar democratically run club, contact me at JerryAERO@aol.com.

Open: 1st John Stoehr; 2nd Rigo Hernandez.
Under 18: 1st John Stoehr; 2nd Rigo Hernandez.
Under 18 Girls: 1st Kaylyn Olivera; 2nd Yahaira Fidhel.
Under 12: 1st Jorge Guevara; 2nd John Roslund.
Under 10: 1st Charlie Picoli; 2nd Kevin Cuertas.
Under 18 Doubles: 1st Piero Denegri/Frank Zangi; 2nd John Stoehr/Rigo Hernandez.


Arizona February Open

Phoenix, AZ • Feb. 18-19, 2006 • By Wayne Johnson

The Arizona Open turned out to be an international affair with players from Germany, Russia and Japan entering in the Open Singles. The U.S. was well represented with players from as far away as Georgia, Connecticut and Montana. We were very pleased to have Vigo Christophersen from Germany playing in the tournament. Vigo, who was on the same team as Mark Haskenski in Germany, took the Singles crown while only dropping one game to Dr. Mitsu Nakada of Japan.

Open Singles: Vigo Christophersen d. Simen Potaychuk, 10,2,3,2; SF: Christophersen d. Mitsu Nakada, 2,4,-9,5,7 Potaychuk d. Alex Lai, -7,6,9,10,-8,8
Open Doubles: Simen Potaychuk/Matt Winkler d. Vigo Christophersen/Derrick Cone, -7,9,5,-9,5.

Over 60 Singles: James Morris d. Mike St. Louis, 5,6,5,6; SF: Morris d. Volf Vaksengisser, 2,7,7,-3,6 St. Louis d. Ferenc Soi, 6,2,7,7.
Over 70 Singles: Bill Cantor d. Scott Williams, -7,3,-10,5,6; SF: Cantor d. Franz Schauer, -3,5,9,-6,9 Williams d. Peter Au, 10,-9,5,9.
U2100: Mario Lorenc d. Michael Shieh, 10,-9,10,13,7; SF: Lorenc d. Keith Chan, 6,8,2,11 Shieh d. Derrick Cone, -9,6,-8,10,-7,8,15.
U1900: Brian Annest d. James Morris, 10,-10,-9,4,4,-10,6.
U1750: Misha Chernobelskiy d. Daniel Poon, -8,4,8,-7,13,9,8.
U1600: Volf Vaksengisser d. Joe Pierotti, 8,6,10,5.
U1450: Victor Flores d. Chung-Fu Chang, 6,10,4,6.
U1300: Lev Vays d. Scott Williams, 8,-8,6,7,-9,7.
U1150: Tyler Score d. Marvin Rosenberg, 9,10,-22,-9,11,3,9.
U1000: 1st Arpad Torma 2nd Mike Cottingham 3rd Wally Barber.
U2800 Doubles: Eric Chan/William Wong d. Xin Johnson/Peter Au, 6,7,5,5.
Bill and Louise Meiklejohn have been more than generous to the sport of Table Tennis. As a condition of a gift to the alma mater, they created the “East Coast version” of the famous Meiklejohn Senior tournament held annually in California. They were repaid with excellent performances and a spirited competition here in Pennsylvania. NATT operated the tournament, and held it in conjunction with a Four-Star set of events, the Quaker City Open.

Referee Pat Collins and UPENN’s Al Pendleton were essential to the tournament success, providing supervision of the competition and the physical oversight of the playing hall. Table spacing was generous, and if it was a little warm, players seemed to find it acceptable. There was great appreciation for the generous prize money as well.

Atanda Musa gave us a great demonstration of his skill, little diminished by the passing years! The Manhattan resident took first place in Over 40 singles with an impressive 9,-9,7,6,7 win over De Tran, his doubles partner.

Together, Musa and Tran took the Over 40 Doubles category in a great final against Li Yuxiang and Daniel Green, 12,8,-8,-10,7. In fact, all the doubles events were well played and a joy to watch!

Li Yuxiang won the Over 50, but without the chance to show us his best game, as his opponent, Jan Klemendorf twisted an ankle on his way to that final and was forced to default. Jan’s tenacious game had earned him the right, but his throbbing foot would not cooperate. Daniel Green gave a fine performance in taking Over 60 honors against ever-so-eligible, 70 years plus, George Braithwaite, 9,-8,8,-6,9. While you won’t find their names in our winner’s list, I have to add that I continue to be impressed by players “of a certain age” who not only compete well in these age events, but also have no problem in vanquishing the bulk of USATT members in match play. I admire the play of Dave Sakai, Gary Fraiman, Gary Guzdenko, Lim Ming Chui, Nazruddin Asgarali and Jiri Hlava more and more each year.

At the other end of the age spectrum in our field, you had to be impressed with the hard-working and successful Yang Jiang. This young man was involved in several event categories, was unfailingly prompt and courteous and showed no sign of fatigue. He not only came second to Reza Ghaist in the Under 18 Boys, he won the Men’s Under 22 in a style against Alden Fan, the U-2125 in seven beautiful games against Inna Leskova, and the U-2375 against the smart Nazruddin Asgarali. My hat’s off to you, sir!

It seemed that Daniel Kokotov, Ramon Barrera, Taylor Wilk and Jesse Estlow were also continually in play, and a quick look at our results shows why. In the U-950, U-1100, U-1250 and U-1400, the winner of the lower rating event managed to be second place in the next higher step. That’s always a good sign for a player’s future progress!

Open Singles

Group One: Zhang, Teile, Ko, Lilly

The Canadian contingent at this tournament was spearheaded by Wilson Zhang, who came accompanied by his wife, Alice. Wilson’s play is perhaps the best on the continent at this time, and nothing we saw in this round robin upset disturbed that belief. Christopher Teile (pronounce that “Tyler”) is a soft blocker with very good touch against the loop. To his credit, he did scrape Wilson for a game, and the only one to manage that as Zhang came through in first place. The Qualifier, Ron Lilly, went 4-2 against both Teile and Ko, which made the head-to-head confrontation between Teile and Ko decisive. Edward Ko’s combination of flat attack and loop attack unsettled Teile’s control game, and -4,7,8,9,-9,5. Ko defeated Christopher for the second advancee’s position.

Group Two: Musa, Munoz, Nadmichettu, Sakai

Musa dropped a game each to Raghu and Dave, but was a perfect 4-0 against Munoz, with scores of 4,12,4,12. You might suspect that the sun was in someone’s eyes. Raghu needed six games to get past the wily Dave Sakai, -7,16,9,8,-6,6. Munoz had more trouble, -4,9,9,9,6. That made Nadmichettu’s match with Munoz pivotal in finding our second seed, and 6,-9,6,3,5. Guillermo advanced past the youngster to the quarterfinals.

Group Three: Kamkar-Parsi, Tran, Kim, Poradich

Follow closely, because this gets complicated! When the dust had settled three players were tied, with records of 2-1 in the group, 1-1 against each other. Valdimir Poradich was left behind, losing to Homayoun, 3,4,4,-10,11; and to De Tran 6,-8,7,-9,9. With no way to advance, he defaulted his match to Kim Bong Geun. Kamkar-Parsi defeated Kim, 16,5,13,-6,11,7, so you see right away that Kim has “game.” De Tran does his part by upsetting Homayoun, -9,6,-9,9,11! What a great comeback! Kim completes the paradox by defeating De Tran, -9,8,6,7,9. So in game count amongst the tied players, De Tran is 5-7 and finishes third, while Kim’s 6-5 places him ahead of Homayoun’s 7-6 to decide first and second. These always take a while to explain to the players, who can’t believe they finish behind someone they defeated head to head.

Group Four: Therien, Dubina, Li, Fraiman

No such confusion here, as Xavier Therien passes through unblemished, 4-0 ahead of young Peter Li, 4-0 against Gary Fraiman, and staves off an upset from Samson, 4-3 (-8,-10,-5,10,7,10)! These are two excellent young men, and always a pleasure to see them in play, both their games are fluid, stylish and powerful! Dubina goes 4-0 against both Li and Fraiman and secures his spot in Sunday’s quarterfinals as well.

Quarterfinals

Wilson Zhang vs. Guillermo Munoz

This match did nothing to dispel the notion that Wilson may well be the best player on the continent! Munoz, who has taken games from Werner Schlager and has come from Mexico many times to puncture a bubble north of the boarder, is no slouch. The veteran was simply...
Atanda Musa vs. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi

I combine these two quarterfinals, because the story, unfortunately is the same. Neither Korean player appeared, so Kim and Ko are both out by default. As is NATT policy, neither of them is paid for reaching the quarterfinals and defaulting. I am sure that they had their reasons.

Atanda Musa vs. Wilson Zhang

So the top two seeds do arrive at the Final. Musa has a very straightforward game, beating you with his power. What Wilson shows in the first game is simply amazing. When the two players get into deep from the table powerlooping duels, Musa goes to Zhang’s backhand ... and my eyes go glassy. Wilson is able to powerloop against Atanda’s powerful forehand with either wing! The crowd oohs and ahhs, and Zhang notches game one, 11-3. Musa seems somewhat disgusted with himself between games. He can be forgiven if he is thinking, “Twenty years ago I could take this guy.” But this is 2006. And pulling all his skill to the top in a mighty effort, Musa evens the match, 11-9 in the second game. Now it is Wilson who wears a less than happy expression. But do I notice a subtle shift of tactics? Now, looping hard against each other, forehand to forehand, both players dropping deeper and deeper into the corners of the court, Wilson suddenly snap! Punches that exchange of shots down the line, leaving Musa staring from 25 feet away. Not just once! Not just “wow look what he did,” but over and over and over ... 11-4 in the third for Zhang. This is one player you DO NOT WANT to be in a hole against, so Musa comes out in the fourth with redoubled effort, and exchange after exchange these two trade thunderbolts. But it becomes apparent that Wilson is always one shot better. Musa sends a screaming flat kill against a loop across the table, and Zhang, as though he has these for breakfast, sends it crisply back before Musa has even recovered his stroke. 11-6 and Wilson leads 3-1. The fifth game is more of the same, and Musa trails 7-0 before taking a single point when Zhang misses. A smile lights Atanda’s face and he claps his hands above his head, turning to the spectators, “One for me!” It’s all over, actually, and Atanda accepts his fate, 11-3. He’ll not be beating this man, not today. Wilson Zhang wins, 4-1, and gains $1500 and the title 2006 Quaker City Open Champion.

Great play, great times and great memories! Thank you, Philadelphia! Thank you, UPENN! Thank you Bill and Louise! Thank you players, and we’ll see you back here next spring!

Open Singles – Final: Wilson Zhang d. Atanda Musa, 3-9,4,6,3; SF: Zhang d. Samson Dubina, 5,4,5,3; Musa d. Xavier Therien, 9-9,7,9,7; QF: Zhang d. Guillermo Munoz, 3,9,6,7; Musa d. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi, 6,10,6,5; Dubina d. Bong Geun Kim, def; Therien d. Edward Ko, def.

Atanda Musa vs. Bong Geun Kim and Xavier Therien vs. Edward Ko

I combine these two quarterfinals, because the story, unfortunately is the same. Neither Korean player appeared, so Kim and Ko are both out by default. As is NATT policy, neither of them is paid for reaching the quarterfinals and defaulting. I am sure that they had their reasons, but I have no idea what they were. Dubina and Therien advance.

Semifinals

Wilson Zhang vs. Samson Dubina

Samson’s been training in Ottawa with the Canadians, but will familiarity help him in this uphill battle? Despite his best efforts, it does not. Sporting his highest ever rating of 2527, Samson can offer no answers to the “King of Canada,” 5,4,5,3. The crowd is beginning to realize that Wilson is something special.

Atanda Musa vs. Bong Geun Kim

And great though Musa is, this is no given! Xavier’s a solid 2500 player, and is unlikely to be satisfied with the $300 semifinalist payoff. He shows his stuff by jumping out to a 2-1 edge in games, but Musa’s heart is part of his toolkit. This guy simply hates to lose, and pushes himself into a higher gear. Every game is a cliff-hanger, and either player would be a worthy winner, but only one gets through! By scores of 9-7,9,7,9 Atanda Musa makes the Championship match.

Final

Atanda Musa vs. Wilson Zhang

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • May/June 2006

Under 15 Boys: 1st Wesley Fan; 2nd Toby Kutler.
Under 13 Girls: 1st Emily Yang; 2nd Nicole Jankura.
Under 10 Boys: 1st Allen Wang; 2nd Sam Fazel-Sarjai.
Under 10 Girls: 1st Annie Shi; 2nd Sabrina Douc.

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Great play, great times and great memories! Thank you, Philadelphia! Thank you, UPENN! Thank you Bill and Louise! Thank you players, and we’ll see you back here next spring!

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Under 2500: 1st De Tran; 2nd Bong Geun Kim.
U2375: 1st Liang Yang; 2nd Nazruddin Asgarali.
U2250: 1st Shahab Joudaki; 2nd Dennis Speelman.
U2125: 1st Jiang Yang; 2nd Anna Laskova.
U1850: 1st Chris Salazar; 2nd Herbert Hodges.
U1700: 1st Di Kang; 2nd Daniel Stadden.
U1550: 1st Samuel Russel; 2nd Brahma Koodalur.
U1400: 1st Daniel Kokotov; 2nd Ramon Barrera.
U1250: 1st Ramon Barrera; 2nd Taylor Wilk.
U1100: 1st Taylor Wilk; 2nd Jesse Estlow.
U950: 1st Jesse Estlow; 2nd Christopher Jin.
U800/Unrated: 1st Viral Gandhi; 2nd Mark Hammond.
U4200 Doubles: 1st Shahab Joudaki/Eric Leventhal; 2nd Dennis Spellman/Donald Fellenberger.

Meiklejohn Senior Events

Over 40: 1st Atanda Musa; 2nd De Tran.
Over 50: 1st Yuxiang Li; 2nd Jan Klemendorf.
Over 60: 1st Raghu Nadmichettu; 2nd Bong Geun Kim.
Over 70: 1st Yuxiang Li; 2nd Damiel Stadden.

Ying/Lo Junior Competitions

Under 15 Boys: 1st Wesley Fan; 2nd Toby Kutler.
Under 13 Girls: 1st Emily Yang; 2nd Nicole Jankura.
Under 10 Boys: 1st Allen Wang; 2nd Sam Fazel-Sarjai.
Under 10 Girls: 1st Annie Shi; 2nd Sabrina Douc.
South Eastern Open
Newport News, VA • Feb. 18-19, 2006
By Hiep Tran

First, we’d like to thank our sponsors: Table Tennis Pioneers, TC Electric and the City of Newport News. They have supported us since the beginning of our club’s creation.

Second, we are honored to introduce Mr. Nhan Nguyen. He was the head coach for the Vietnam Junior National Team. He came to the U.S. for two weeks, and we were lucky to meet him and invited him to play in the South Eastern Open.

The 2006 South Eastern Open was exciting because of the presence of well-known players: John Wetzler, Vitaliy Deyak, Nhan Nguyen, Jim McQueen and Hiep Tran. The most intense match was between John Wetzler and Vitaliy Deyak in the final. This tournament is the first time Deyak faced Wetzler. Wetzler beat Deyak earlier in the Under 2300 event rather easily. In the Open Singles, Deyak had to adjust his game and show his powerful two-wing looping. He attacked a lot more during the games, and was a lot more consistent than the first time. Deyak defeated Wetzler 4-1. What a show for everyone there that day!

Open Doubles - Final:
Vitaliy Deyak d. John Wetzler, 7,7,9,8,9;
SF: Vitaliy Deyak d. Nhan Nguyen, 3,5,9,7,10; John Wetzler d. Jim McQueen, 8,8,8,5.
Under 2300 - Final:
John Wetzler d. Vitaliy Deyak, 8,8,8; SF: John Wetzler d. Hiep Tran, 7,7,14; Vitaliy Deyak d. Nhan Nguyen, 9,10,6.
Under 2150 - Final:
Jim McQueen d. Ashwin Peres-Da-Silva, 9,10,8;
SF: Jim McQueen d. Chris Obrian, 7,5,9,10; Ashwin Peres-Da-Silva d. Shannon Martin, 2-10,4,13.
Under 2000 - Final:
Ashwin Peres-Da-Silva d. Chris Obrian, 8,9,4, SF: Ashwin Peres-Da-Silva d. Michael Wilkomer, 5-4,9-9,8; Chris Obrian d. Roger Martin, 9,7-9,3.
Over 55 - Final:
Jim McQueen d. Michael Wilkomer, 9,9,8; SF: Jim McQueen d. Richard Council, 8,7,2; Michael Wilkomer d. Thomas Manley, 17,4.

Under 2050 Giant RR
Class A: 1st Jim McQueen, 5-0; 2nd Dan Barrett, 4-1; 3rd Ashwin Peres-Da-Silva, 3-2; 4th Joong Jung, 2-3.
Class B: 1st Michael Adjei, 4-1; 2nd Morris Abraham, 4-1.
Class C: 1st Gerald Williams, 5-0; 2nd Keith Coleman, 4-1.
Class D: 1st Edward Sobolte, 3-1; 2nd Tommy Berry, 3-1.

Schaumburg Chinese New Year Open
Schaumburg, IL • Feb. 11, 2006 • By John Oh

The excitement is in the air as the competition for the tournament begins on the morning of Saturday, Feb. 11, at Schaumburg Park District, IL. Notable participants gracing the event include legendary Dan Seemiller, young prodigy AJ Brewer, top local player Sasa Drinic, local Polish hero Lukasz Fita, and indigenous national coach Mark Nordby.

After the rated events are over, the final event, Open Singles, begins at 4:00 pm. Soon the singles eliminations are underway, and a small crowd of wanna-play-like-that spectators begin to fill the ringside seats. No one upsets the top to rated more than 100 points above Dan.

The Open final commences. Sasa, holding a small lead to the end, successfully executes his serve and attack at 9-all and wins game one, 11-9. In second game, Dan starts off with a small lead and holds it to 10-7. Sasa fights back, deuces it at 10-all, only to lose the extended deuce at 15-13. Sasa wins the closely contested third game 11-9 much in the same fashion as the first game. Dan comes back and wins the fourth, but Sasa wins the fifth to go up 3-2.

Down 2-5 in a game he cannot afford to lose, Dan calls a time-out. After the time-out, Dan scores 9 in a row! So the match goes into the seventh and deciding game. Before we can blink an eye, Dan is up 3-0 – twelve in a row!

Sacramento Winter Open
Sacramento, CA • Feb. 11, 2006
By James Therriault

Many of the over 160 players expressed their appreciation and enjoyment in participating in one or more of the 24 time-scheduled events, held at Sutter Middle School in Sacramento, Ca.

Hardbat specialist Scott Gordon pulled off four straight wins in winning both the Hardbat and Under 2250. Playing non-stop starting with a semifinal win over tournament director and fellow Sacramento Club Player James Therriault, Scott found his groove enroute to taking two events in dramatic come from behind fashion. He also teamed with partner Ji Li to take second in the Under 2800 Doubles Event.

Freddie Gabriel outdueled his doubles partner Peter Zajac to win the Open Singles Title. He ended Shashin Shodlian’s run of two straight Sacramento Titles by taking Shashin out 3-2 in the semis. Peter got past Avishy Schmidt 3-1 in the other semi. Avi teamed with Misha Kazantsev to knock off Gabriel/Zajac in the Open Doubles Final.

Juniors with strong showings included Sylvan Guo, who took the Under 1450 and Under 1550 events. Arthur Chan placed second to Ray Borror in the Under 750, and also won the Under 2000 event.

Thanks to all the players and helpers who lent a hand or added to the positive atmosphere at the tournament.

Open: 1st Freddie Gabriel 2nd Peter Zajac
U2250: 1st Scott Gordon; 2nd Renjie Liu.
U2000: 1st Mike DeWynter 2nd Bo Ding.
U1900: 1st Vincent Barth; 2nd Khadie Rachmadie.
U1800: 1st Yuriy Boyko; 2nd Dan Vu.
U1650: 1st Jim Langley; 2nd Harvey Gottfried.
U1500: 1st Sylvan Guo; 2nd Timothy Nguyen.
U1400: 1st Sylvan Guo; 2nd Adam Banghart.
U1300: 1st Brian Chen; 2nd Dan Bruno.
U1150: 1st Bernie Pilex 2nd Viktor Kretov.
U1050: 1st Gabriel Reder 2nd Jon Orbell.
U900: 1st Dave Ardisson; 2nd C.J. Solorio.
U750: 1st Ray Borror; 2nd Arthur Chan.
U600: 1st Dave Bernstein 2nd Bryan Gee.
U450: 1st Arthur Chan; 2nd Greg Parkison.
U300: 1st Vania Chan; 2nd Aaron Gipson.
Hardbat: 1st Scott Gordon; 2nd Misha Kazantsev.
Sacramento Winter Open Doubles
Open: 1st Avishy Schmidt/Misha Kazantsev; 2nd Freddie Gabriel/Peter Zajac
U3400: 1st Mark Johnson/Victor Qiu; 2nd Junho Ikuno/Fumi Christiansen.
U3100: 1st Kent Hu/Tom Li; 2nd Dave Flores/Greg Haley.
U2800: 1st Tom Lambert/Kend Sandberg; 2nd Scott Gordon/Ji Li.
Maryland Circuit
Eldersburg, MD • Feb 4-5, 2006
Over 40: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Steve Hochman.
Under 18: 1st Harold Brown; 2nd Zach Ackerman.
U1800: 1st Grigory Yasinov; 2nd Dave Thoren.
U1700: 1st Phil VanDusen; 2nd Chris Puls.
U1500: 1st James Zhan; 2nd Mark Cohen.
U1300: 1st James Zhan; 2nd Harold Brown.
U1100/Novice: 1st Tom Kammerer Jr; 2nd Runzi Sufi.
U3600 Doubles: 1st Julian Waters/Yvonne Kronlage; 2nd Steve Thoren/Steve Hochman.

Maryland Circuit
Eldersburg, MD • Mar 4-5, 2006
Open: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Dave Jarrin.
Over 40: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Dave Kowalewski.
Under 18: 1st Dave Jarrin; 2nd Harold Brown.
U1800: 1st Dave Kowalewski; 2nd Phil VanDusen.
U1700: 1st Marty Hall; 2nd Paul Armentano.
U1500: 1st Gaurav Mantri; 2nd Gary McCone.
U1300: 1st Mike Guckenberger; 2nd Keith Mayo.
U1100/Novice: 1st Gaurav Mantri; 2nd Steve Finkelstein.

Florida Sunburst Tour
Clearwater, FL • Jan. 21, 2006
Championship: 1st Yasmely Vadillo; 2nd Ben Johnson.
Elite: 1st Chamel Rodriguez; 2nd Fred Hautsch.
Masters: 1st Peter Filipowicz; 2nd Charles McConnell.
Expert: 1st Thong Nguyen; 2nd Frank Valliant.
Advanced: 1st John Mason; 2nd Frank Herrmann.
Prestige: 1st Barry Butler; 2nd Govin Rajan.
Challenger: 1st Henry Tickleberg; 2nd William Robbias.

February Open
Davison, MI • Feb. 25, 2006
U2250: 1st Tesi Iloh; 2nd Ivan Popov; 3rd Avant Amin.
U2100: 1st Tesi Iloh; 2nd Ivan Popov.
U1950: 1st Andre Khailo; 2nd Dave French.
U1850: 1st Andre Khailo; 2nd Dave French.
U1750: 1st Jonathan Serman; 2nd Tim Vandervest.
U1650: 1st Dave Pech; 2nd Teymour Sepahbodi.
U1550: 1st Joseph Helfand; 2nd John Roznarek.
U1450: 1st Christopher Brewer; 2nd Fred Dunlap.
U1350: 1st Milind Joshi; 2nd Steve Carra.
U1200: 1st Milind Joshi; 2nd Nikhil Deshmukh.
U3600 Doubles: 1st Jim Keep/Stanley Carra; 2nd Dave French/Gary Bublitz.

New Hampshire Open
Manchester, NH • Feb 19, 2006
Class A: 1st Rich DeWitt; 2nd Lim Ming Chai.
Class B: 1st Slawomir Marczak; 2nd Trung Pham.
Class C: 1st Sanjin Osmancevic; 2nd Ken Cameron.
Class D: 1st Mohamad Al-Sabek; 2nd Hung Voduc.
Class E: 1st Andrew Owens; 2nd Robert McPartlan.
Class F: 1st Taylor Wilk; 2nd Andy Venikov.
Class G: 1st June Freydina; 2nd William Swift.
Class H: 1st Boping Lai; 2nd Nina Xue.

Front Range Open
Fort Collins Senior Center
Fort Collins, CO • Mar. 25, 2006
Open Singles – Final: Chris Salazar d. David Hays.-9,6,9,6,9. SF: Salazar d. Alfred Adjie, -9,9,8,6; Hays d. Will Horowitz, -3,-8,7,6,8. Open Doubles – Final: Richard McAffee/Mike Mui d. Lu Gao/Liu Liangli, -10,9,-9,6,8,8. Over 40: Alfred Adjie d. Sam Wu, 9,3,8.
The 2006 Cary Cup Championship was held over three days (March 17-19) in the Bond Park Community Center located in beautiful Cary, NC, surrounded by pine trees and a freshwater lake. The tournament was played in two adjoining gymnasiums that were connected by a large lobby where player registration and the Cary TTA Museum and archives were prominently on display. There were 36 Stiga tables and over 250 players participating in over three days worth of events. This tournament was very special.

First there was good prize money: Over $9000 in I.H! spread out over all the events. $4,000 for the Open 1st Place, $1,000 for 2nd place, $600 for 3rd and 4th and $250 each for 5th through 8th. The U.S. Classic Open (hardbat) also had over $2000 and the Women’s Open had approximately $1,000 total for all line lists. Second, there was the use of the popular giant round robin format for both the Open on Saturday and the Classic on Sunday. Saturday’s round robin allowed all players a minimum of 12 matches. Even I, a two-time Olympian and a “Super Mom,” was exhausted after all these matches. Sunday’s Classic Hardbat Open also used the giant round robin format. I played 14 matches and finished second, losing to Eric Owens in my final match. I really couldn’t even move my legs during the final (this is my good excuse)!

The main event on Saturday found over 30 players rated 2000 or higher competing for gigantic trophies and prize money. Many 2200 and up players including Rich Dewitt (who made it to the final round), Mike Levene, Nigel Christopher, Didi De Souza, and many, many others rounded off the playing field. In the end it was the top two seeds, Eric Owens and Barney J. Reed, battling it out. There were many great rallies by both players but in the end Eric came out on top. It was Eric’s weekend apparently — 1st Place in Open Doubles, 1st Place in the Saturday Open Round robin, and 1st place in the U.S. Classic — wow!

Tournament Organizer Mike Babuin was a perfect southern gentleman (wearing shorts, of course). He selected Mr. Ralph Presley to operate the computer systems and chose several of the most beautiful southern bells to staff the other tournament operations, including making announcements and awarding trophies. The tournament was run with overall professionalism, enthusiasm and good old southern hospitality, which were very much appreciated.

While introducing the winners at the awards ceremony, Mike emphasized his love for hardbat and his hope for its continued revival at the club level. He also revealed that the tournament balls for the “Classic” were a well preserved stash of 47-year-old 38mm, Double Circle Balls — still sealed in the boxes — for this extraordinary Classic Hardbat Open Event. Finally, great thanks to all of the major sponsors including Newgy Industries, the Courtyard by Marriott, Town of Cary, Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, and North Carolina Amateur Sports. Without the help of these wonderful sponsors the tournament would not be possible. Congratulations to all the winners and to tournament staff for a very successful tournament. We all had a great time.

**USA Classic (hardbat):** 1st Eric Owens; 2nd Lily Yip; 3rd-4th Tahl Leibovitz & Ray Mack.

**Women:** 1st Lily Yip; 2nd Biba Golic; 3rd-4th Beata Wronska & Brenda Mun.

**Class A:** 1st Eric Owens; 2nd Barney J. Reed; 3rd-4th Didi De Souza & Nigel Christopher.

**Class B:** 1st John Bauer; 2nd Sam Pirzada; 3rd-4th Tim Connelly & Giancarlo Anselmo.

**Class C:** 1st Daoyang Chen; 2nd Elas Gonet; 3rd-4th John Salas & Bilal Soylu.

**Class D:** 1st John Pahl; 2nd Albert Chan; 3rd-4th John Nagel & TJ Sawner.

**Open Doubles:** 1st Eric Owens/Courtney Roberts; 2nd De Tran/Tahl Leibovitz.

**U4000 Doubles:** 1st Tahl Leibovitz/Steve Blijheij; 2nd Hiep Tran/Bernard Eballer.

**U3000 Doubles:** 1st Phil Parry/Ilya Zaverukha; 2nd Matthew Schell/Todd Friend.

**U2500 Doubles:** 1st Ty Petty/David James; 2nd Derek Xu/NanFei Xu.

**U1100 A:** 1st Raul Hafeez; 2nd Vishwanath Sriwattana.

**U1100 B:** 1st Mark Gressett; 2nd Suresh Subramanian.

**Junior Achievement Award:** Marcus Jackson.

**Cadet Achievement Award:** Ilya Moundous.
Missouri Winter Games
SPRINGFIELD, MO • MARCH 4, 2006 • BY BILL LEWIS

The recent $4600 Missouri State Winter Games Open provided some brilliant matches. A strong gale force wind – a Texas-size panhandle storm - drove in upon us. The Lone Star State’s Texas Wesleyan jerseys and their patented blue/black colors were omnipresent. A bleacher-filled crowd was treated to an aspect of table tennis not seen much in these parts – total team dominance. The following are examples.

Eric Owens, the 2001 United States National Champion, played Ludovic Gombos in the Progressive Singles championship – two Tex/Wes players duking it out for first place. For those fortunate enough to view this match they were treated to a looping bonanza. Precision attacking and counter-attacking by both Owens and Gombos kept the crowd entertained and there was much entertainment to be had as the match went the distance, with Eric winning 3-2. The marquee match-up was held on one of the club’s Killerspins RAD tables. The new RAD’s blend of white legs, wrap-around red striping and blue 1-inch top seemed to reflect American table tennis – a national spirit, vibrant in appeal and appearance.

In getting to the final Owens had stiff competition in a field of 40. First, Owens got by Hassan Anis, from Lawrence, Ks., in straight sets. Then it was on to one of Springfield’s finest, in Dale Boswell, but he handily beat Dale 3-1. (Side note, those who watched that match said that Owens “let” Dale take a game from him – just to be nice.) Owens then eclipsed the talent of Abdul Khan, another Texas Wesleyan, in four games. Still stiffer it went as he took on Carlos Chiu, another Tex/Wes player but he also got by Carlos 3-1. Then came the final match with Gombos.

It was only a tad bit different for Gombos who initially took on Bob Willits from North Liberty, Ia., but won handily in three straight. Ludovic then dispatched Jennifer Mast, she of the sister-brother-father trio from Dundee, Oh., in three straight games. Then it was on to one of Minnesota’s best players in Mitch Seidenfeld, but Mitch too was bested three straight. Subsequently, Ludovic sent Samson Dubina to the fifth place bracket polishing him off, 1,9,2.

There is an obvious reason why Owens is a national champion – in the past as well as the present he continues to be a strong challenger for anyone in USA table tennis. It’s the nature of winners – they just win, baby!! (Ludovic is the defending champion from the May, 2005, “Star of India” Open in Springfield. That tournament brought notoriety for Ludovic, at least in the hearts and minds of Springfieldians, where with panache, Ludovic beat the underdog, Malaysia’s Olympic superstar Choor Sime Oh. 4-2 for a $750 win.) It was a clean sweep for “Team Texas” as Carlos Chiu garnered third and Courtney Roberts placed fourth. Consolation (loser’s bracket winner) went to Dennis Muessig, St. Charles, MO. Muessig lost the key, pivotal, first match to Dale Boswell, but then went on to score four consecutive match wins. Muessig bested the talented Sam Auyeung, Lees Summit, MO, for his $50 dollar consolation win. A downloadable copy of the Progressive Singles, with 1st place through 40th is at www.ozarkstabletennisclub.com.

The Open Singles winner had a different format but the ending was somewhat similar. The finishers in respective order were: 1st Eric Owens; 2nd Carlos Chiu; 3rd Samson Dubina; and 4th Joey Cochran. Cochran is a very young, but very talented South Bend, Indiana, prodigy. There were a total of 27 players in the Open Singles. Under 2300 followed the same format as Open Singles. This time though they were minus some of the higher seeds. Dinko Kranjac, Texas Wesleyan, finished first, with Joey Cochran of South Bend, Indiana in second. Winfred Addy, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in third. while Tim Yardy, Tulsa, Oklahoma, claimed fourth. There were 28 players in the event.

Open Doubles had the tandem of Eric Owens and Ludovic Gombos versus Joey Cochran and Samson Dubina in the title match. Eric and Ludovic, with a combined rating of 5072, had just enough to overcome the 4708 rating of Cochran and Dubina. Consolation went to Carlos Chiu & Dinko Kranjac both from Tex/Wes. There were six teams in Open Doubles.

There were 27 tables arranged on 23,000 square feet. There were a total of 384 matches called, not including the 19 matches which were in doubles. A final tally showed that 120 players showed up and vied for 12 event titles. There were also sixteen players rated over 2000, ranging from 2005 up to 2563. This was easily the most talent laden and largest tournament in Springfield’s history.

I would like to say Thank You to all of the participants and to their families. We hope that you felt duly welcomed to Springfield and that you had some old fashioned “fun” at our Missouri State Winter Games Open tournament.

Progressive Singles: 1st Eric Owens; 2nd Ludovic Gombos; 3rd Carlos Chiu; 4th Courtney Roberts.
Open: 1st Eric Owens; 2nd Carlos Chiu; 3rd Samson Dubina; 4th Joey Cochran.
U1200: 1st Tim Yardy; 2nd Shang Lee; 3rd Zbigniew Mastylo; 4th Tim Aikey.
U1500: 1st Dinko Kranjac; 2nd Joey Cochran; 3rd Winfred Addy; 4th Tim Yardy.
U2100: 1st Winfred Addy; 2nd Shang Lee; 3rd Joey Cochran/Samson Dubina.
U2300: 1st Dinko Kranjac; 2nd Joey Cochran; 3rd Carlos Chiu; 4th Tim Yardy.
U2500: 1st Dinko Kranjac; 2nd Joey Cochran; 3rd Carlos Chiu; 4th Tim Yardy.
U3000: 1st Dinko Kranjac; 2nd Joey Cochran; 3rd Carlos Chiu; 4th Tim Yardy.
U3200 Doubles: 1st Shang Lee/Randy Liu; 2nd Mike Meier/Sadiq Khan.
In Memoriam: Bob Chaimson (1914-2005)
By Barbara Kaminsky

On Dec. 3, 2005, Robert Chaimson, father of Barbara Kaminsky (this writer) and Donna Sakai, passed away after suffering complications from a fall in his home.

My father was born in Washington, D.C. on March 18, 1914. He graduated from Central high school in D.C. in 1931, and in 1941 he married Leona Schneider of Wilkes Barre, Pa. In the 30’s, he delivered newspapers at the Rincon. Later in the decade sold souvenirs and memorabilia to gift shops at the Washington monument, Lincoln and Jefferson memorials, and hotel gift shops. In 1945, he joined the Naval Research Laboratory, as a mechanical engineer, where he worked designing early solar satellites and traveled to South America, Cuba, and Mexico to set up tracking stations. He retired in 1979 and then worked eight years as a consultant to the lab.

In an article he wrote for Topps in the June issue of 1961, he tells of his first contact with table tennis at the Southeast Boys Club in Washington, D.C., where the 1956 Eastern Open was being played. He had taken both of his girls and recalled the friendly doorman, who said, no charge for the girls. Donna was most interested in the hot dogs. Dad was most impressed with the skilled play and lively enthusiasm and was invited to visit the DCTTA headquarters at 11th and Pa. Ave.

During the following six months, my father was our coach in the basement playing with the family and neighborhood children on the table he had built for us. At that point, my father decided it was time to get better competition if we were to progress any further, so he took me to the 11th St. club where I received coaching from Jim Verta.

After another six months, the club moved to a larger facility on 9th St., N.W. After this move, my mother and Donna would accompany us on our visits and started to play. The first major tournament we attended was the 1957 U.S. Open in South Bend, Indiana. We traveled over 14,000 miles by car to tournaments in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, New York, Milwaukie, Detroit, Chicago, Toronto, White Plains, Ashby Park, Columbus, and Newport News. Through his efforts, both Donna and I became USATT Hall of Fame members. He also accompanied me in 1959 and 1963 to the World championships in Dortmund, Germany and Prague, Czech, and went with Donna to England where they watched the English Open.

In July of 1958, he accepted the post of USTTA membership chairman and enjoyed the correspondence involved and was able to increase the membership with my mother’s help. Later in 1958, he was elected President of the USTTA and during his term, the 1960 U.S. Open was held at the Shorham Hotel in Washington D.C. Everyone who attended thought it was one of the best ever. The only kink was the weather. We had a freak March snowstorm. Besides membership chairman and DC president, he was also Vice President of the USTTA from 1960 to 1964.

My father was not a great player, having taken up the game late in life, but he always gave it his best and the thing he enjoyed most was meeting and talking with people from all different walks of life. Our home was always open to anyone who wanted to come out to Maryland. I can remember long discussions into the night with EC members about ways to increase membership and improve the popularity of the game. We also had various players over for dinner from time to time including Bob Ashley and Daryl Flann who were playing tt. during intermission at Globetrotters games. Houresh Bozorgzadeh and his Iranian friends were also frequent visitors with whom Donna, Yvonne Kronlage and I would hang out with.

In 1992, he suffered a stroke which left him paralyzed, but he still made the effort to attend Donna’s Hall of Fame induction in Florida in 1997.

In addition to his interests in table tennis, he was also a magician. Life master in bridge, held many patents (including one for a periscope design used at golf tournaments and parades), and in his later years enjoyed selling his wares at flea markets.

He is survived by his two daughters, eight grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Bob Chaimson with Hall of Fame daughters Barbara Kaminsky (L) and Donna Sakai

In Memoriam: Carl Kronlage (1934-2005)
By Barbara Kaminsky

By now, many of you have probably heard of the death of Carl Kronlage at 71 years of age after his long fight with lung cancer. Carl never smoked but it was thought that he got the cancer from high levels of radon in the basement of his home in Columbia, Md.

where the family lived for eleven years. He put up a good fight from the onset of his illness in February of 2002 until his death on August 8, 2005. In table tennis, he was a fighter as well. He really did not like to lose and always gave his best, even in practice games at the club.

Carl was born in New Orleans, LA, on July 11, 1934. He was a graduate of Jesuit High School in New Orleans and earned a bachelor’s degree in physics from Loyola University in Louisiana in 1956. He was in the Air Force for six months before he moved to Maryland and joined the National Security Agency where he worked as an electrical engineer for 38 years.

In 1957, he met his future wife, Yvonne Lesure, who had come over from her home in England at the table tennis club in Washington, D.C., and in 1961 they were married. Together, they were instrumental in developing table tennis in the suburbs. With Bowie and Melba Martin, they opened the Prince Georges table tennis club underneath the Prince Georges plaza Hot Shoppes cafeteria. One year later in 1963, the club was becoming too small so they moved to Hyattsville, Md. By this time, the DCTTA club had closed to make way for a parking facility and this was the only club in the Washington area. The first year was very good, but gradually they were in financial trouble. The Martin’s had moved back to North Carolina, so the Kronlages had all the responsibilities. In 1966, they held the Eastern open to try and raise money for the rent. The tournament for those times was a success (about 130 entries) and kept them going a little longer. In 1967, they signed the club over to Si Ratner with six months left on the lease. Meanwhile, Yvonne had her second child and by 1969 was eager to play again. The Hyattsville club had burned down and once again there was no place to play. This time they found a place in New Carrollton in an elementary school a few blocks from their home. While at this location, they held many tournaments and had many members.

In 1977, they moved to a house in Columbia, Md. It was during this time when Carl fell off a ladder while cutting down a tree in the backyard and injured his shoulder. He could no longer play table tennis to his satisfaction so he started playing golf. Carl always loved the outdoors and throughout his life at various times he played tennis, table tennis and golf. He was better than average in all these sports. After his retirement in 1994, golf and woodworking occupied most of his time.

He is best known in table tennis circles for his win over Dick Miles in 1961 at the team championships and for his handmade bat that had a handle six inches longer than standard. While the racket seemed illegal, it was completely legal and Carl was able to gain a psychological advantage over many of his opponents.

In addition to his wife, Carl is survived by a son, Curt Kronlage (who was a very good junior player in his day) and a daughter, Yvette Harris, and six grandchildren and one step-grandson. Three of his grandchildren, Michael, Jennifer, and Paul Harris have been tournament players at MdTTA.
In Memoriam: Ruben Gomez (1922-2006)

By Si Wasserman

Ruben Gomez left us on Jan. 17, 2006; he left a noteworthy legacy. He was one of the vanguard that fired the shot heard round the country: the momentous switch from pimpled rubber to sponge that generated controversy that reverberates to this day. He also was part of the Old Guard of the 1950s that helped land California prominently on the U.S. table tennis map. During that spectacular decade such luminaries as Kenny Choi, Erwin Klein, Sharon Acton, Valieri Bellini, Alan Hescovic, Leonard Cooperman, Mike Falston, Susie Hoshi, Tiny Moss, Richard Card, Mendel Milstein, Danny Cohen, Bob Ferguson, Charleen Hanson, Mike Fiedler, and John Hanna vaulted onto the national stage.

I first met Ruben in 1953 when he and Kenny Kuroda climbed the stairs to my California Table Tennis Center in Hollywood. They were employees of the Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department. They worked at Griffith Park’s massive service yard where they played “ping-pong” during their lunch hours. Neither was aware of organized table tennis. After some coaching and a modicum of encouragement, I convinced Ruben to enter the twice-weekly handicap events at the Center. Soon after he joined the USTTA and became a regular at local sanctioned tournaments.

Although Ruben didn’t learn the game until he was 31, he charged from novice to championship class in short order. He went on to become a perennial challenger in senior events, winning his share of titles in local competitions for almost four decades. The highlight of his career came when he nabbed Esquire (over 50) singles and doubles in a national tournament in the late 1970’s.

Ruben was compassionate and generous. When Bernie Bukiet moved permanently to California, Ruben provided room and board in his home and transportation for the three-time U.S. Open Champion. In return, Benevolent Bernie coached his benefactor. Afterwards Ruben’s playing form, not surprisingly, resembled Bernie’s singular style of play.

I dropped out of table tennis in 1964 and did not have contact with Ruben again until about 1989. He, John Hanna, Rudy Hartmann and I serendipitously gravitated from Greater Los Angeles to the Oceanside area—some 100 miles south. We got together and played regularly in the clubhouse of Leisure Village, a gated senior community in Oceanside,

where, at John Hanna’s invitation, we basked in ideal playing conditions. Over the years, Ruben, Rudy and I also practiced at La Jolla’s fine Community Center. We even frequently hit a few in Rudy’s garage. Those were the happy days.

The happy days ended in 2001. Ruben was beset with glaucoma, competing him to ponder abandoning tournament play after 48 years of constant competition. Nevertheless, the following year he opted to attend the USA Nationals as a spectator. At the eleventh hour he entered the Over 80 event. He explained that it was the first year of his eligibility for the age group and he had been looking forward to competing.

As we motored to Las Vegas, Ruben asserted, “Even if I make a fool of myself while playing, I can consider my entry fee as a donation to USATT.”

As chance would have it, we were in the same round robin bracket. He fought gamely when we met but trying to hit the right ball of the two glaucoma projected proved Sisyphus.

Fate struck another blow in 2003. Ruben developed an aortic aneurysm that three operations failed to correct properly. He knew even his recreational playing days were over. With this in mind, he gave his favorite bat to his favorite friend, Rudy Hartmann, exclaiming, “It still has some good shots left; put it to good use.”

During the past several years, whenever I returned from a tournament, he always phoned to ask how I fared and the results of other events. His interest in the Game never waned.

Although Ruben had an abiding love for the Game, he also enjoyed a full life. His birthplace was El Paso, Texas. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was a civil engineer with the City of Los Angeles for 35 years. Survivors are his longtime companion, Jacqueline Bruenau, a sister and brother, a daughter, three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Ruben and I shared countless of hours of table tennis that have left pleasant memories Requriescat in pace, amico.

USATT League of the Month:

W.C. Cleveland Junior Table Tennis League

By Ralph Presley

Junior League has been running since 2000

Named after the famous Mr. W.C. Cleveland, who passed away in September 2002, the Junior League hosts players from the Greater Atlanta Area. The League started as a vision of four prominent coaches. From the beginning, Richard McAfee, W.C. Cleveland, George Cooper and the author Coach Ralph “RADAR” Presley had a vision to start junior league play. Former players who came through the league include such champions as Lee McCool, John Mar, Preston Chin, Robert Andersson, Aldis Presley, and Alex Yadgarov, all rated over 2000.

The League plays on Sunday afternoons in the month of January and February using the two-man Davis Cup format. From the inception there were four teams: Coan Park, coached by George Cooper; Ben Hill, coached by Ralph Presley; Chastain Park, coached by Richard McAfee; and Whitehead Boys and Girls Club, coached by Mr. Cleve.

The League has added new Clubs

The league was originally called the Central Atlanta Junior Table Tennis League. After the passing of Mr. Cleveland, the name was changed in his honor. The League now has a team from Augusta, GA. Coach Xin Peng, the number one active rated player in Georgia, coaches them. We also have two other teams that are located outside the city limits, the Carrollton Georgia Parks and Recreation and the Newnan Georgia Boys and Girls Club. Both Teams travel over 50 miles to participate. Other Teams are from West Hunter Street Baptist Church, Shiloh Baptist Church, Hapeville Recreation Center and the Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy.

Playing a League with so many different types of players, we play four groups. The groups are Open, U-1300, U-1000, and U-750. We want to develop our young players and not discourage them. All players who participate receive a trophy, which are presented at the Season ending Banquet. Play lasts about two hours and the kids love meeting other kids from different walks of life. They find out that kids are the same everywhere you go, no matter where you go. Maybe, if the world played more junior leagues, there would not be so much violence. Much like the Little League World Series, it brings all Nations together in peaceful competition. We could have Junior League competition for the grass roots developing players as well as the elite players.
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The Inside-out Serve of Thiago Monteiro
The inside-out serve has found its way into most top players' repertoire. It curves to the opposite side of the player’s arm—for right-handers it breaks to the left, for lefties to the right. When the new serve rules came into effect, it seemed endangered for a while, because it is difficult to keep the contact visible. But it is so useful that players have adapted and figured out a way to still use it. In this picture sequence, Thiago Monteiro of Brazil shows a clean example of why it is so useful. While it looks somewhat awkward, it provides an opportunity to disguise the spin by varying the wrist and arm movement, each adjustment in the wrist movement’s direction generating a different type of spin.

This is one of the more complex serves, because it includes a series of movements of different body elements, some moving in the same direction, some in a different—occasionally opposite—direction. Initially, it is hard to get any spin at all. When former World Champion Werner Schlager was asked about it, he said that only after a few tens of thousands of practice serves can one expect to start generating an appreciable amount of spin. A loose grip, while helpful for any serve, is critical in this case, because the range of the racket movement has to be great enough to allow it to rotate 180°. In order to keep the serve legal, i.e. the ball contact visible, but still be able to achieve the goal of deception, the player must move from the contact point and create a relatively large space which will allow his hand to pass with the racket pointing toward him. This serve also requires a strong arm, because some of the movements run against our usual direction, yet must be fast to generate spin. It takes great strength to generate that speed but still move smoothly.

And yet, despite all these difficulties, the serve can be so effective that most top players have taken the time and effort to develop it. It is more difficult to read than other serves, and due to the fact that the sidespin component is turned by 90° from the vertical, it can yield a pop up and an easy put-away for the server. The movement of the arm is almost identical to the previous serve, but the significant difference lies in the timing of the wrist snap reversal. Contact occurs between 14 and 15. In order to generate only forward motion, but no spin, the racket face must have no up or down movement relative to the ball on contact. Monteiro achieves an intricate balance by moving the wrist upward by the same amount as his arm moves down (14-16), essentially matching the racket’s downward motion to that of the falling ball, and thus not imparting any under or topspin, but almost purely forward momentum.

The lower row shows the completion of the movement for a no-spin serve. A no-spin serve is only effective in context with other, very spinny serves. Mistread by the receiver, it can yield a pop up and an easy put-away for the server. The movement of the arm is almost identical to the previous serve, but the significant difference lies in the timing of the wrist snap reversal. Contact occurs between 14 and 15. In order to generate only forward motion, but no spin, the racket face must have no up or down movement relative to the ball on contact. Monteiro achieves an intricate balance by moving the wrist upward by the same amount as his arm moves down (14-16), essentially matching the racket’s downward motion to that of the falling ball, and thus not imparting any under or topspin, but almost purely forward momentum.

For a topspin variation of this serve, the wrist snap reversal has to occur before contact, and the racket has to brush upward against the back of the ball.

For a receiver, it is critical, but very difficult to make out the exact time of contact from all this motion. While the ball can’t be disguised from view, the actual time of contact is tough to ascertain when the ball is falling only millimeters from the racket surface and could be touched at any time with very different results for every passing millisecond.

Prepare yourself for an uncomfortably long period, during which your practice of this serve doesn’t yield any results. Once it does, though, you’ll be glad you put in the time.

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