USA TABLE TENNIS

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF USA TABLE TENNIS

September/October 2006 $3.95

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The United States Table Tennis Hall of Fame Induction Banquet is held annually at the USA Nationals in Las Vegas, on the 104th floor of the Stratosphere Hotel. The view is arguably the most fantastic on Earth! The food’s pretty good... the speeches fabulous (if occasionally a trifle long)... and a good time is had by all for a relatively inexpensive $40.

However, success has caused a minor problem. The room holds an absolute maximum of 70 people, and while we used to sell tickets until the last second to come close to a full house, the last two years we’ve had 90 and 100! This forced us to use an adjoining room (where we have the cocktail hour before dinner) to handle the overflow. Unfortunately, some of the folks relegated to the second room have been very unhappy... and I can’t blame them. They do come into the main room after dinner for the speeches, but still... the main room is certainly the in place to be. So... what do we do?!

Our committee has discussed various solutions and here’s what we have decided: the first 70 paid tickets will be in the main room. After that... it’s Room #2 and our apologies. Be prepared to sign up early or be shut out! No exceptions! Hopefully this will give everyone plenty of time to prepare.

If you want to be certain of Room #1 status, please send me a check now... $40 each... made out to U.S. Table Tennis Hall of Fame... and your spot will be reserved. (Send checks to 608 Ravinia Road, Highland Park, IL 60035.)

Naturally, if you are not amongst the first 70 and you want a refund... you’ll get it! 

Contest: Best Excuses for Losing a Table Tennis Match!

In the last issue, we called for the most creative and bizarre excuses for losing. The response was rather low, and several said they didn’t see it before the July 24 deadline. We decided that was a good enough excuse, so we’re extending the deadline to Sept. 15.

Note that the excuses do not have to be ones actually used. (In fact, we’re hesitant to use ones where you quote someone else, unless that person submits the “excuse” himself/herself.) Use your imagination, and come up with the most creative and bizarre ones you can think of, yet with just a touch of authenticity that makes it remotely plausible. For example, “The dog drank my speed glue!” You can send in made up excuses or real life ones that really happened. The best ones will be printed in USA Table Tennis Magazine, including a Grand Winner and possibly winners in various categories. Limit ten excuses per entry. Send your excuses to Editor Larry Hodges at larry@larrytt.com, 240-686-0128 (fax) or 13403 Demetrias Way, Germantown, MD 20874.

Wanted: Ruth Aarons Paddle

Chuck Hoey, Director of the new ITTF museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, is trying to put together a complete collection of paddles used by every world singles champion since the founding of the ITTF in the early 1930s. He is in need of one used by Ruth Aarons. If anyone has, or can locate, a Ruth Aarons paddle they would be willing to donate (or sell) to the museum, please contact Dick Evans at dickevans@peoplepc.com.

 Corrections

In the last issue, on page 42, the Pavlovich sisters from Belarus (Viktoria and Veronica) were incorrectly listed in the captions as the Peluchovas. (Sorry, Renata!) Also in the last issue, in the National College Championships, there should have been a logo for collegiate sponsor Newgy on page 71, not the logo for Paddle Palace (which sponsors the USATT League, among other things, but not the college championships).

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As a curious seven-year-old, Atha Fong tagged along after her siblings in sports camp, watching them play various sports. She was most excited, however, when they played table tennis. Mesmerized by the flight and flight of the little orange balls, Atha began picking them up for her siblings, and quickly became eager to bang them around herself. Her parents initially rejected Atha’s plea to play, as she was not yet tall enough to see over the table. But Atha persisted, and soon she was allowed to enter Bill Lu’s coaching program at the Concord Table Tennis Club.

After developing proper fundamentals in Concord, Atha improved quickly into an aggressive looper. In the past few years, her junior career has blossomed. She won the Joel Ferrell Award for athletic ability and sportsmanship at the 2004 Junior Olympics, where she also won three different playing titles. In late 2005, Atha reached her highest rating yet at 2177. Then at the National Championships last December, she made the National Junior Team for the first time by placing second in the Junior Girls’ team trials. This earned her a spot to compete in the North American Championships, where she finished an impressive third in Girls’ Singles. Atha also teamed up with Judy Hugh to reach the semifinals of Women’s Doubles and the final of Junior Girls’ Doubles.

Known for her powerful forehand attacks, Atha is trying to polish her backhand and sharpen her sense of touch. Now coached by Dennis Davis and Stefan Feth, she plays five times a week at both Concord and the Palo Alto Table Tennis Club. This summer, she will also train in the USATT training camps in Texas and China, in anticipation of playing in her first World Junior Circuit, in China.

As expected from her bold style of play, Atha enjoys the intensity of the sport. From the moment she begged her parents to let her play, she has displayed the same desire for table tennis. As Atha reveals, “there’s nothing that can give me a rush like table tennis!” She practices with a passion, only pleased when she is drenched with sweat and feeling accomplished about her hard work. Not only does the training keep her in shape, her improvement allows her to train with better players, which only increases the fun and the hard work she wants to endure.

Atha hopes her training will pay off in the near future, as she aspires to succeed in the China WJC and to make the Junior Girls’ team again in 2007. Her later goals are to make the National Women’s Team and to play in the Olympics. Even farther down the line, she would like to “become an annoying old lady who beats little junior players.”

Aside from table tennis, Atha plays clarinet and competes for her high school varsity golf team. While golf lacks the same intensity as table tennis, Atha finds its relaxing nature helpful in calming her anxiety in table tennis, providing a balance to settle her intensity. In addition, Atha was recently admitted into Stanford University. Although currently undecided on a major, she is seriously contemplating law school in the future.

With all her success in and outside of table tennis, Atha remains grateful for her supporters, including Coaches Feth, Tang, Angela Sun, Fan Yi Yong and Dennis Yi. She is especially thankful for Coach Lu, who introduced her to serious table tennis, and Coach Davis, “for believing in me and for motivating me to put 100% into everything I do, for table tennis and in life.” Most of all, Atha credits her family, who provide unwavering encouragement through her highs and lows. Her parents have devoted much time and energy into her development, and her sister Kyna has guided Atha as a coach, a practice partner, and an adamant supporter.

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USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • September/October 2006
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This is the club that most visitors refer to as “TABLE TENNIS HEAVEN.” It operates six days a week for a weekly total of 38½ hours. The facility is located at the Balboa Park Activity Center on Park Blvd, in world-famous Balboa Park. It was built in 1999 by the city of San Diego to conform to the Olympic specifications of Table Tennis, Badminton and Volleyball. That means: wood flooring, perfect lighting and a very high ceiling. Twenty Butterfly Nippon Rollaway tables are comfortably accommodated.

The club, known as the SDTTA (San Diego Table Tennis Association) is approaching its 50th Anniversary in 2009 and closed out 2005 with 459 paid members. Member dues are $40 annually, while visitors are charged $3.00 per day. The affairs of the club, a non-profit corporation, are managed by its seven-person Board of Directors.

Besides Table Tennis play, the club offers its members a Web Site (www.sdtta.org), a Quarterly Newsletter, an Annual Luncheon Party, a FREE Round Robin Tournament each Thursday evening (Open to non-members as well), which yields computerized ratings to all players. Every Saturday, we provide FREE Coaching to all Juniors with additional coaching during the week if desired. This program is handled by at least five experienced coaches and is divided into two sections, namely Pee Wees (young beginners approx. five yrs in age) and Intermediate and Elite Junior players. The latter group is also sponsored by the SDTTA (FREE entry and sometimes additional prerequisites) to major 5-Star Tournaments. Through our coaching program, we have developed the following Nationally Ranked Juniors:

- Don J. Alto (2322) - U14 Boys’ Champion
- Earl J. Alto (2220) - U18 Boys’ Champion
- John J. Alto (1540) - U12 Boys’ Champion
- Bruna Vlasic (2065) - U16 Girls’ Champion
- Tommy Gu (1891) - U11 Girls’ Champion

We are confident that you will see one or more of these young people on future Olympic Teams, hopefully medaling.

For the general membership, it is the club’s policy to hold at least two USATT sanctioned tournaments each year, currently the Southern California Open in the Spring and the San Diego Open in the Fall. Table Tennis tournaments for the California State Games, Senior Olympics, Military and City sponsored Recovery Games are also held at the SDTTA.

The club has a long and proud history and counts among its USA Hall of Fame members such dignitaries as Patty Martinez, U.S. Women’s Champion at the astonishing age of 13, and Mike Dempsey, 8-time World Paralympic Champion and 6-time Paralympic Champion.

We invite all the visit is for our sanctioned tournaments as well as our Thursday Night affairs. We want you to see why so many consider us “Table Tennis Heaven.”

Kevin Quan won Division C (1550-1699), finishing on top in a field of 13 contestants, edging out Anthony Tong. Both had a 2-1 winning record and the playoff was decided by their head-to-head match, which had gone to Quan 3-0. “I love the league, I hope we can do this as long as possible,” Quan said.

Tony Guo won Division D (1400-1549), with Paul Do coming in second again, as he did in the fall. The division had 10 players at the start.

Wheelchair player Rick Kiesling carried the win in Division E (1200-1399), which had the most crowded field with 14 players. Vandy Tep got second place with the same record as Kiesling (2-1), but lost the head-to-head match, losing the fourth game 18-16. “This is my very first tournament win in this club, and all these guys are great players,” Kieslings said.

Division F (under 1200) presented probably the most interesting development, when a qualifying player did not show up for the playoffs (traveling for some training in China, no less!), and was replaced by the next qualifier, Harriet Quon, who proceeded to win the trophy. Second place was a three-way tie, with honors going to Jeff Curlee. This division had 13 league players.

Hiroshi Koshimoto was surprised at the traditional post-playoff party to learn that he was voted by the club’s board as the LTTC 2006 Member of the Year. “I am shocked beyond belief, I did not expect it the least,” 77-year-old Koshimoto said.

LTTC Spring League started on April 15. It features a new format with three-player teams and will go on for six weeks. The new format is experimental, and offers doubles games in addition to the individual play.
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 cannot be performed by a single spin machine.

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President's Report
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

If you usually skip over this report, now is a good time for you to start reading. Why? Because USATT is on the verge of adopting new Bylaw provisions that will somehow or another impact you. As usual, I’m devoting this space to the “association primer series,” and this one will explain some of the main issues the Board is looking at as we take more steps to conform to, and revise where we deem appropriate, the Bylaws proposed by the United States Olympic Committee.

Governance Reform & Restructuring
If you missed some of these reports, here’s a quick review. A few years ago the USOC was embroiled in very public Congressional oversight hearings and media headlines. The USOC hired some companies/advisors in order to reform itself and its governance structure. Ultimately, the USOC Board voted to dissolve itself and adopted new Bylaws. Its Board went from 120 members to 11 members. The USOC kept national associations informed about the new direction it wanted to pursue. About a year ago, the USOC produced new Bylaws for a national association it had taken over. The USOC forwarded those Bylaws to all of the national associations. At the time, and it’s still the case today, those drafted Bylaws were considered to be recommended model Bylaws. National associations are not compelled to adopt them.

As your president, and as the Chair of the Board, I have urged the USATT Board to review the proposed Bylaws, to compare the proposed Bylaws with our own, and to come up with recommendations. We are very mindful that 2006 would normally be an election year, so we are pressing hard to come to some conclusions as to how we will transition from our current system to a newly reformed system. As soon as we have come to a resolution regarding 2006 elections, we will post a notice on our website, www.usatt.org.

The Board first began discussing the model Bylaws a year ago when the USOC Sports Partnership Director assigned to USATT attended our September, 2005 Board meeting. At that meeting, the Board voted to change the Bylaws to require 9 members to approve changes. Attendance was required. Prior to the meeting, I had asked Board members to consider various issues. In July, the Board met and began taking the steps that will be necessary to move the reform process forward.

What are some of these reforms? A primary item put forth by the USOC is that all Board members must be U.S. citizens. The USOC model Bylaws even require citizenship in order to vote. Issues like those piqued our interest and what we did at the July Board meeting was make a list of all of the “hot button” issues. We then asked the USOC to comment as to which items the USOC felt that we had some latitude to decide for ourselves, and which items the USOC felt were most important. For example, the USOC felt that all Board members must be U.S. citizens, but that if the Board decides that all members can vote, regardless of U.S. citizenship, then we could allow that.

As this issue goes to press, we are still awaiting further clarifications from the USOC. But it seems sure that the USOC would like to see the membership given ample notice of proposed changes, the opportunity for members to comment, and, a timeline that would ensure that all Board seats in the changeover be filled simultaneously. Among the new Board members would be 2 independents, a coach and an umpire.

Some of the primary hot button issues are whether or not to respect the terms of those who were already elected through 2008, what latitude to give to a to-be-reconstituted Nominating Committee, and how to select the Chair of the Board. Keep checking www.usatt.org to find updates on this important issue.

Club Initiative & State Association Project
Two years ago the Board set quadrennial priorities. The number one priority was creating state associations that would work closely with USATT to support the club structure. Meanwhile, at our budget meetings, the Board keeps voting to sock away our year-end financial surpluses into our reserve account.

About a year ago I met with a small group to discuss club initiatives. Shortly after that Bowie Martin, owner of Martin-Kilpatrick (Butterfly distributor) and I spoke. It turns out that he was very eager to assist USATT financially and logistically. Martin-Kilpatrick hired 2 staff members to work on club development and creation of state associations as a contribution to USATT. If you run a club, and if you have not yet completed your survey, please check for it at http://www.butterflyonline.com/clubsurvey.asp. Thank you, Martin-Kilpatrick, for this support. I also thank Bowie for taking on a leadership role in getting the table tennis companies to meet at the recent U.S. Open.

Thanks to Volunteers
On a closing note, I’d like to extend USATT’s appreciation to the many volunteers who assist on a variety of USATT’s activities, especially the most recent U.S. Open.

Treasurer’s Report
By Tong Lee | Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2005

Financial results for fiscal year 2005 were positive with a net income of $12,605. Total revenue was $1,272,104, an increase of $27,641 over last year, primarily due to a profitable U.S. Nationals tournament and an increase in website advertising revenue. Total expenses for 2005 were $1,259,499, an increase of $104,618 over the previous year. This increase was primarily due to $50,000 for TV production relating to the Pro Tour. USATT anticipated the reimbursement of this amount under a contract at the time of booking a Pro Tour, but did not receive reimbursement for it because the contract was not executed for various reasons. Had the contract been mutually canceled or suspended, USATT would not have committed to a Pro Tour. As a result, the U.S. Open-Pro Tour suffered a loss of $29,050. Legal expenses of $56,814 related to the Killerspin arbitration and an increase in expenses for membership services, especially insurance premiums, also contributed to the increase in expenses.

Athlete development enjoyed an increase in spending of $33,741. Funding for coaching development and for officials increased by $11,694, and funding for collegiate table tennis increased by $8,600 to $10,600.

The financial strength of USATT continues to grow with an increase in Net Assets from $384,425 to $397,030 during the year. Cash and cash equivalents increased from $341,347 to $373,384.

Our independent auditor gave USATT a clean opinion on the audit of our financial statements for 2005.

This is my last report as the Treasurer of USATT because my term expires in the Fall. I take pride that under my watch, the financial state of the Association has improved significantly. USATT financial house is in order and we have generated a cumulative surplus of $355,000 in the last four fiscal years.
Reminiscences
By Steve Isaacson

This is the first of a series of reminiscences from the days of hard rubber bats, 21-point games, the USTTA, Table Tennis Topics, and 25 lifetime memberships. This particular story is a favorite of Hall of Famer Jack Howard.

In March of 1957 I was a junior at the University of Wisconsin and had just won the fifth and final spot on the UW Bowling Team. This marked the third straight year I had made the team, each time at #5. Unfortunately, the date of the Big Ten Championships conflicted with the dates of the 1957 U.S. Open Table Tennis Championships. I called tournament director John Varga and explained my dilemma. I asked if it would be possible to play table tennis on Friday, bowl on Saturday, and return for the final rounds of table tennis late Saturday and Sunday. Luckily, the bowling tournament was to be a Purdue University while the table tennis was in nearby South Bend, Indiana. Mr. Varga informed that although I was seeded seventh in men’s singles, he absolutely would not make any scheduling exceptions for me!

Well . . . bummer! I had to make a choice and I wasn’t about to let my badger teammates down. In retrospect I should never had told Mr. Varga and perhaps by the luck of the draw, I would not have been defaulted. Perhaps I would have been the 1957 U.S. Open Champion . . . not Bernie Bukiet! (Incidentially, my record against Bukiet was 0-10, while my record against runner-up Erwin Klein was 0-6.)

Anyway, as luck would have it, I beat 49 other bowlers to win the Big Ten bowling title, and happily joined my teammates at the Saturday night awards banquet, held at the Purdue University Student Union. After I modestly accepted my trophy (for those of you who have known me for these many years, you can accept my claim of “modestly” or not), I was congratulated by the runner-up, a young man from the University of Minnesota, who was a regular bowler in Chicago’s Classic League, with an average of 213. My average hovered at about 193. Apparently my badger teammates down. Iii retrospect 1 should never had told him the triggering catalysts were Patrick Lee’s article on Will Shortz (this article should, in my opinion, be sent to our newspaper contacts) and the obituary on Grady Cox Gordon, an outstanding human being, medical doctor and athlete, and a dominant player in the older senior events in our sport for many years.

Coincidentally, I have been put in a similar position once before. I had just upset the world table tennis champion Richard Bergmann in the final of a Friday night tournament at Chicago’s Net and Paddle Club, winning the first prize of $12. Bergmann, not unlike our University of Minnesota bowler, offered to give me five points a game for $20! I declined knowing that the memory of my win would last a lifetime and it would only be tarnished if Bergmann beat me with a five-point spot!

Well, the two of us bowlers strolled through the halls of the Purdue Union and he was beginning to irritate me a bit with his accusations that I was not “man enough” to gamble. Yeah, right! Soon we passed a room and heard the unmistakable sound of “ping . . . pong . . . pong . . . pong . . .” He immediately challenged me to a table tennis match . . . for money! I was dumbstruck! Is he kidding? I was ranked among the top ten table tennis players in North America and his chances of beating me were akin to my chances of beating Ma Lin today! I accepted his challenge . . . we went in . . . we played . . . we went out about an hour later, and I was $200 richer. From the moment we entered the table tennis room my only fear was that he would glance at the bulletin board where, you guessed it, a large photograph of me was prominently displayed, as National Collegiate Champion! Fortunately, he never saw it.

Note to Marty Reisman: If you ever write a sequel to The Money Player, feel free to use this article . . . with charge.

Dear Editor,

Every two months I receive a high-quality issue, but this issue [July/August] was so outstanding in its breadth of content in so many ways that I feel a compulsion to write and say so. I think the triggering catalysts were Patrick Lee’s article on Will Shortz (this article should, in my opinion, be sent to our newspaper contacts) and the obituary on Grady Cox Gordon, an outstanding human being, medical doctor and athlete, and a dominant player in the older senior events in our sport for many years.

Only Tim Boggan, in his masterpiece obituary, could do justice with heart, soul and spirit in reporting Grady’s many outstanding accomplishments and his objectivity in reporting to his friends his condition in his final days.

Sincerely, Dave C. Dickson, Jr.
An Official’s View
By Dr. Azmy
The Pursuit of Excellence and Conflicts

A successful and smoothly run U.S. Open took place at Charlotte, N.C. The venue, the Hotel, and the hospitality of the people of the city added charm to the atmosphere.

Thanks and appreciations are due to all those who contributed to the tournament success: the volunteers, the USATT president, staff, administration, the tournament committee, the officials, the umpires, and the players. However, one problem disrupted the atmosphere, a conflict between players, coaches, and umpires.

The players are trying to reach the highest level of play, in order to be chosen to play in International, World, and Olympic competitions. The umpires are performing their best to meet the highest standards of evaluations, in order to be chosen to umpire at the International, World, and the Olympics competitions.

The umpires found themselves in a dilemma. On one hand, the umpire is under the gun. Either he/she has to strictly enforce the rules or he will be released from umpiring. On the other hand, players and coaches would like to have a relaxed atmosphere where they can enjoy the matches and the game. This is the root of the conflict.

Evaluation of umpires is done by qualified international evaluators. Usually the evaluators do not evaluate umpires of their own association. The system of evaluating umpires was started by the USATT Officials Committee long ago, and is used to move umpires from one level to another (club, regional and national). The ITTF-URC adopted the system and extended it to the international and Blue Badge levels.

We are fortunate to have foreign umpires in both our Nationals and U.S. Open every year. These umpires give our players a taste of the way umpires enforce the rules at international tournaments.

More conflicts erupt from a misunderstanding by players and coaches that, as long as the players are not complaining, the umpire should not enforce the rules. That is nice and sweet for the winner. But the loser often complains vigorously after the match, believing the umpire did not enforce the rules. The situation is more critical when a player asks for an umpire because he believes his opponent is serving illegal. When the umpire goes to the table to enforce the rules, he finds that the player who asked for his presence is not serving legally either. Once the umpire calls a fault, all hell breaks loose.

There is also another assumption that the umpire should not call faults when the score is close near the end of a game. However, this is when players are concentrating on winning the point and often forget to serve correctly, falling back on bad habits.

The umpire is there to adhere to the rules regardless if the violation is at the beginning or the last point of a game. The end of a game is critical for both the player and umpire. If the player pulls out a new, clearly illegal serve, it should be faulted. However, if it is a marginal serve that the player has used before in the game, the player should be given the benefit of the doubt.

One can state that the cause of many of these conflicts is the lack of adequate training by players. Many players do not enforce the rules while training or practicing.

Coaches sometimes ignore the faults their players are committing as long as they are winning. Some coaches concentrate only on the mastery of play and ignore the behavior of their players.

I apologize for this long introduction, but I find it necessary to come to the points below.

1. There has to be adequate communication between coaches and umpires. The Umpires Committee and Coaches Committee should work together.
2. Umpire meetings, briefings, and seminars should include the coaches at the tournament.
3. Coaches meetings should dedicate an essential segment to cover the rules of the game, with an emphasis on new rules.
4. The Umpires Committee can send a representative to cover any new rules.
5. Coaches should enforce the rules strictly during training sessions, especially with young players and beginners.
6. Coaches have to agree on the ways and means of training, to deal with behavior problems, self-control, discipline, acceptance of losing. These are the basic elements of creating champions.

Let us work together to develop the best players, coaches, and umpires in the world.

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Senior Corner
By Olga and Stan Kahan, USATT Senior Committee Co-Chairs
949-830-6699 (phone) 949-240-7167 (fax) haf@berkeley.edu

“Fitness for the fun of it” — the main motto was advertised in the Spring 2006 issue of Nevada Senior Athlete. “Are you frustrated in maintaining your physical fitness because of a lack of opportunity for adequate competitive table tennis in your specific age group, i.e. those 40-49 year olds, the group of players which is still excluded in most local state senior table tennis games?” asked Dan Cravens, who will be directing table tennis events on Friday October 7, in Dula Gymnasium, LV Blvd and Bonanza, Las Vegas. However, the yellow insert in the Registration Packet of the 2006 Nevada Senior Games specifies that a Masters Program is being initiated on a trial basis for inclusion in this year’s Senior Olympics activity. It is an innovation which might change the course of table tennis activities, which might be of great interest to the senior age group, namely those table tennis enthusiasts who are approaching the middle age bracket. “Your age group might not qualify for the National Senior Olympics but you will enjoy all the rewards that competition and good health provides, conclude the proponents of this change. (More information is available at www.nevadasenioryolympics.com, 702-242-1590).

David Zhuang, the former U.S. Champion, took first place in Over 40 Singles at the Meiklejohn North American Senior Championships by defeating Atanda Musa this past June, and received the $1500 prize. (All USATT members over age 40 are eligible.) We wish both young competitors to reach a ripe old age and participate with us for many years.

In the same tournament, last June, octogenarian Sonia Flynn from Vancouver, BC, Canada took first place in the Women’s Over 70. She started playing in Canadian Senior Games in 1992 and since then has continued her search for “gold” in local and international tournaments, culminating with her efforts in Bremen, Germany, last May at the World Seniors: Gold for Woman’s Singles over 80, and Silver for Doubles Over 80. Five years ago, Sonia became a coordinator for Greater Vancouver, Canada. In the World Masters Games in Edmonton, Alberta, she captured three golds and one silver. She practices twice a week at the Bosor Recreational Centre and once at the Chinese United Church, Vancouver. Sonia supports the USATT Senior Committee’s recommendation for organizing the first Continental Senior Tournament in Las Vegas, in the near future. “It’s a great idea!” I would like to call on other players from Canada to join U.S. forces to achieve this wonderful goal!
2006 HIGHLAND OPEN
Lincoln Center Fieldhouse
November 18th & 19th, 2006
Highland, IN

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TOURNAMENT INFORMATION
PLAING SITE:
Lincoln Center Fieldhouse
2450 Lincoln Street
Highland, IN 46322

Top 4 websites:
SouthShoreSports.org
or
Fortytravel.org

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR
Phil Schmucker

TOURNAMENT REFEREE
Peter Chamberlain

TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE
Brad Balmer
Jason Deman
Jerry Goeller
Kara Schmucker
Dan Seemiller

ELIGIBILITY
Highland Open is open to USATT members or those who join.

DEADLINE for ENTRY is TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7th (but don't wait until the last minute!)

FOR TRAVEL INFORMATION CONTACT
South Shore Sports Promotions at 866-93DUKE OR 219-931-0900 / $5600 & Tax for Single or Double

QUALITY INN
AMERHOST INN
4200 Calumet Avenue
7813 Indianapolis Blvd
Hammond, IN 46323
Hammond, IN 46323

PLAYING SITE
Lincoln Center Fieldhouse
2450 Lincoln Street
Highland, IN 46322

PLAYING SITE
Lincoln Center Fieldhouse
2450 Lincoln Street
Highland, IN 46322

All age event cut-offs will be 11/1/06.

NOTES:
1) Tournament management may modify, combine, or cancel events, limit entries, & assign temporary rating for unrated players.
2) Drawn within a round robin may be modified to avoid state / club duplication, but no modifications will be made between round robin events.
3) All USATT rules will be enforced.
4) Events starting after 4 PM on Saturday may carryover final rounds to Sunday.
5) Entry Limitations: PLEASE DO NOT enter 2 rated events with same starting time, OR more than 6 total events.
6) Unrated players may enter any event (except rated doubles), HOWEVER, they will not advance from their Round Robin!
7) All events will be 3 out of 5 games except Open Singles and Open Doubles which will be 4 out of 7.
8) Ratings will be from the September/October issue of USA Table Tennis magazine.
9) Any questions regarding the tournament, eligibility, or entry should be directed to Dan Seemiller at (317) 231-4545 between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM CST.
10) Withdrawals up through Monday, November 13th will be eligible for full refunds.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • September/October 2006
Leah Thall’s younger sister, Thelma “Tybie” Thall, made her first recorded table tennis appearance at Cincinnati’s Feb. 8, 1942 Jewish Center Midwest Closed. She was a straight-A student and the “first girl in the history of [Columbus, Ohio’s] East High to win a varsity letter in [tennis].”

The sisters honed their table tennis games in the early to mid 1940’s while working as bookkeepers. They had three sports-minded brothers, Abe, Lou, and Bennie, who in “basketball, handball, and golf...made quite a name for themselves in Buckeye circles.” I don’t know who gave Thelma the nickname “Tybie” - it comes from two Hebrew words meaning “dove” and “devil” - but I do know that Tybie’s brother Abe encouraged her to box and play tackle football. Leah in her youth wasn’t so gutsy. She started to play ping-pong at her local Y because she was fearful of diving into the pool there.

While the brothers served in the War, “the girls helped to entertain the wounded soldiers by giving table tennis exhibitions throughout Ohio’s many hospitals.” Leah, it turns out, likes fudge cake and so as not to risk putting on extra poundage bowls in a Columbus league, where she has a 160 average and a high triple of 606. Tybie enjoys cheese blintzes with sour cream, and might be seen, rain or shine, riding about on her red and white Roadmaster bicycle, holding up an umbrella if need be.

The 1947 National’s, in which Leah would finally have her breakthrough Singles win, may have seen Tybie snap her bra-strap and, a bit frantic, go hunting for a safety pin. But the Thalls in their 5-game Women’s Doubles final got it together to exact sweet revenge over Mae Clouther and Millie Shahian who’d beaten them deuce in the 5 th the previous year.

This was Tybie’s 1 st National Championship, Leah’s 7 th. In the seven years she was paying her Singles dues, in U.S. Opens from 1941 through 1947, Leah, every year, had either won, or was a finalist in, either Women’s or Mixed Doubles. Sol Schiff, with whom she’d win many Mixed titles, explained that “Unlike most women players, who had to push balls, Leah had a heavy, close-to-the-table chop that slowed play and so provided opportunities for her partner to hit and for Leah to follow with sharply-angled corner balls or her own put-away forehand.”

By 1947 then, the Thall sisters had definitely arrived - they’d just started collecting trophies; now their table tennis careers were ready to blossom.

In Paris, at her first World Championships, Leah almost won what might have been the match of her life. In the 2 nd round of the Women’s Singles she played the eventual winner (and finalist for seven straight years), Hungary’s Defending Champion Gizi Farkas, and was up 16-9 in the 5 th, but couldn’t hold on to win.

Leah’s rise to such heights was understandable - for this was a woman who would say that Table Tennis was “not only a way of life, but life itself for me.” From the time she married Ty Neuberger in 1948 and moved to New York City, scarcely a day went by that she didn’t play at a Club that was as famous as she herself was.

“She’d play anybody,” said Doug Cartland - “but of course always for money. Even to a Junior who’d come looking for a game, she’d say, “Well, sonny, I’ll play you, but you know we have to gamble.” Since she obviously was a denizen of the place, of the early afternoon, still-dark courts,
some young innocent, accustomed to the USTTA's uptightness about gambling—and Leah's husband Ty was notoriously the worst offender—might momentarily be thrown into a panic. But, with or without a spot, her stakes, in that dreaded New York City Club of iniquity, were always the same—a penny a point.

In 1948, the U.S. Women's Team to the Wembley, England World's was Leah, Tybie, and Mae Clouther. Tybie said her mother had misgivings about her 23-year-old daughter, who'd never been on a ship before, taking long voyage. Was it really worth it? Who was she apt to beat? What was she apt to win? Well, maybe quite a few upcakes. Hostess had about her 23-year-old daughter, who'd never been on a ship before, taking the same—a penny a point.

It was a blustery trip over to London. “Talk about having an excuse for missing a shot,” said Tybie, “try playing table tennis on a ship crossing the Atlantic in winter.” Another excuse might have been appropriate for Tybie during the U.S. Team's pre-World's commitment to play exhibition matches in Sweden. Seems that in connection with one of those exhibitions Tybie found a room she thought she might change in, had set down her shoes and rolled-up poster she'd been given, only to be shocked to find others there—five Swedish male athletes, all naked. Taking up her shoes and rolled-up poster, she blurted out, on leaving, the only line of Swedish she knew—“Thank you very much.”

Nothing like a compliment, eh?

Although Tybie would tell English table tennis writer Peggy Allen that she “couldn’t understand why, when having a shampoo [in London], the assistant made you lean forward, thereby wetting your face, when in America they do it the sensible way and lean back,” she had nothing but praise for this Feb. Wembley World's. “It was worth coming to England,” she said, as she enjoyed a practice session with Leah, “just to see this wonderful show, so wonderfully organized.”

In Singles, Leah got to the quarter's before losing again to Farkas. In Women's Doubles, she and Tybie had an excellent 5-game win over former World Champion Trude Pritzi of Austria and future 6-time World Champion Angelica Rozeanu of Romania, then fell in the semi's to the English winners Peggy, Franks and Vera Dace.

In the Mixed, Tybie was paired with Dick Miles who, after losing the 5th, was bitterly disappointed on losing his quarter's Singles match to Bo Vana, the eventual Men's winner here. The World Singles was what mattered to Dick and with that gone he'd just as soon head for home—but Team Captain Bill Price insisted, under threat of suspension, that he play. Tybie and Dick hadn't played together before—Dick wouldn't even partner her in practice. She said he deliberately came half an hour late for the opening match, was smiling because he thought they'd been defaulted, and was irritated to learn they'd been given a walkover against no-show Belgium.

They advanced past a French pair who were upset that Miles didn't shake hands at the end of the match. “You make fools with us!” one of them sneered. Years afterward Dick would say, “Yeah, I acted like a real shit.” The turning point came in the quarter's against the strong English team of Johnny Leach and Vera Thomas when, behind 2-1, the U.S. pair managed to win the last two games 26-24 and 21-19.

In a 1949 English Open interview with Peggy Allen, Tybie would recall how for years as a young child she was on a Sunday morning radio program, reciting poems she'd learned, and had grown up taking large audiences so much for granted that “nerves” were never a problem for her. To keep focused here in her matches she just kept repeating to herself, mantra-like, “Hit this ball— as if to say: ‘It's the only ball I'm hitting today.”

This technique—and/or Tybie's sun-bursting enthusiasm that thawed Dick's cold pride at even trying in this for him unworthy and
meaningless event - produced the gutsy win over the English. Then the U.S. pair's momentum, and Dick's meticulous footwork - It was phenomenal," said Tybie, "especially considering we were strangers to one another's movements how he was always in position" - carried them to a semi's win over the soon-to-be World Championship pair of Ferenc Sido/Angelica Rozzani.

But off to a very bad -13, -14 start in the 11:30 p.m. final against Vana and Vlasha DepeTrisova, a pre-War World Women's Singles and Doubles Champion, Dick, by now thinking to himself that Tybie was "a crazy hitter," told her, "Listen, this is embarrassing. Just push the ball back - you don't hit a ball until I tell you to." And now - "with Miles driving forcefully" and Tybie taking "Vana's sneaky service with coolness" - they weathered 18 and 19 games, then, with Tybie in a zone, hitting iii forehands, "It was phenomenal," said Tybie, "I wasn't excited."

At the English Open that followed, Tybie took the Women's Doubles with our World #2 McLean and the Mixed with Miles - over Reiseman and McLean, deuce in the 5th.

In 1949, the sisters won their 3rd straight U.S. Open Women's Doubles - after which Tybie married Norman Sommer and retired. Well, almost, for she made the U.S. Team to the 1951 World's but opted not to go to Austria.

Leah, however, did go to Vienna, and in the Corbillon Cup play was terrific - she defeated former World Champion Trude Pritzi and that year's World Women's Doubles Champions, the English Rowe twins, to post an 8-1 record. Then in Singles she advanced to the quarter's where, down 2-0 to Rosalind Rowe, she rallied to win in 5. Though in the semi's she again lost to Farkas, she earned a World #3 ranking.

"Leah never knew how good she was," Miles told me. "She really didn't have a tremendous ego. Often she'd say she was lucky to win this or that tournament, and she really meant it." However, she did enjoy being in the International spotlight. A photo shows her in Tokyo in 1956 with the Chinese stars Sun Mei-Ying and later World Singles Champion Guo Zhonghui. Leah beat them both in Corbillon Cup play.

Although in 1954 in the German Open at Kiel, Leah was a disappointed finalist to Scotland's 2-time World Women's Doubles Champion Helen Elliott, perhaps our all-time toughest loss was to the Japanese Champion Tami Okawa at the 1957 Stockholm World's, for, after leading 2-0, she lost deuce in the 5th.

They Said It...

By Larry Hodges

"To keep your brain young and supple, you can purchase software like Merzenich's, or you can do one of a million new activities that challenge and excite you: playing ping-pong or contract bridge." -From the August 2006 Reader's Digest in the Mind Games article. Submitted by Vikash Sahu.

"My ping-pong game isn't half bad. I'm big on table games and bar shuffleboard. Wow, it sounds like I'm ready to go on a senior-citizens cruise!" -Actor Owen Wilson. The quirky star admits the game is less than cool as it is normally associated with the older generation. From www.pr-inside.com, June 7, 2006.

"We had one in Cleveland and it was fun. We just figured we would bring one in and have fun with it." -Mike Gonzalez of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team, who bought a table for the team's clubhouse. He listed Jack and Craig Wilson, Ian Snell, Paul Maholm and Ryan Vogelsong as the team's top table tennis players. From www.mlb.com, May 29, 2006; contributed by John Jarema.


"Unlike a lot of stories that you hear about actors who demand lots of things in their contract and lots of people and chefs and all that jazz, I'm not one of those. All I want on location of a movie is a ping-pong table in my living room in the hotel. That's all I want. In fact, a couple of years back I went to London and Judi invited me out to dinner, and I said, 'Oh good, we'll get to play ping-pong again.' She said, 'Oh please, I don't have a ping-pong table.' I said, 'You don't have a ping-pong table?' "So I went out that day and I purchased a ping-pong table and I got a truck and a couple of hefty guys and I drove out to her country house - some people bring flowers, some people bring wine, I brought a ping-pong table." -Actor Kevin Spacey. From www.contactmusic.com, July 19, 2006. First contributed by John Jarema.
Miss Ping was not shy. How could she fail to draw one’s attention to her “See, I’ve met Chou En-lai” lapel-pin picture of the two of them shaking hands. And how fond she was of telling anyone who would listen, or anyone who wouldn’t, that (in traveling with the Canadians) she was “the first American into China” on that 1971 “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” trip.

“Mrs. Neuberger’s Paddle Is Her Passport” the New York Times once so aptly put it, and, as the exuberantly popular U.S. Swaythling Club Miss Ping was not shy. How could she fail to know and like the most respected players and officials throughout Europe and Asia.

And Tybie, what of her long ago retirement? I can tell you first-hand it didn’t last. Almost 40 years ago, alas, we were the losing Mixed Doubles finalists to Errol and Priscilla Rees in the Long Island Closed, and to Jardo Stanek/Shazzi Felstein in the New York Open. Beginning in 1962, Tybie had won the first of her four Long Island Closed Women’s Championships, the last a deuce-in-the-3rd thriller over Defending Champion Alice Green. Then, in 1963, Tybie and a few Long Island friends founded the North Shore Women’s Tennis League. After beginning with 6 teams, four decades later they had 96 teams, and Tybie was being honored at a Babe Zaharias Tennis Awards Luncheon.

In 1968, Tybie was a losing Mixed finalist again, but this time at the Arizona Open where now her daughter Marilyn was playing.

Another decade, and Leah and Tybie were back at their beginnings to be inducted into the Columbus, Ohio Jewish Center’s first Hall of Fame. George Steinbrenner sent a letter of congratulations and Gene Michael, former Manager of the Columbus Clippers but soon to be with the New York Yankees, was the main speaker. Tybie’s induction into the USTTA Hall of Fame immediately followed.

Another decade, and Tybie was starting a new trophy/medal-winning career, as it were, that’s lasted now more than 15 years. In 1989, she won the National Senior Olympics (65-69 Division) at St. Louis, and 15 years later, at the Huntsman World Senior Games, she was still winning the Gold (80-84 Division).

And what fun! At that 2004 Huntsman, she also got to see her daughter Marilyn team with Ting-Ning Cheung to win the 50-59 Division Doubles. Win with Tybie’s help of course. Strange, Tybie herself never took a lesson, never had a coach - and yet she herself has always loved to teach. Maybe, just maybe - see that 1948 World Mixed Doubles Championship medal she’s wearing - she may even have taught Dick Miles a lesson.

Ladies and Gentlemen, accepting this year’s Mark Matthews Lifetime Achievement Award for herself and for her sister, Leah “Miss Ping” Neuberger, is our 1980 Hall of Fame inductee, back after a quarter of a century, and as honored as ever, Thelma “Tybie” Thall Sommer.

In Memoriam: John Schneider
(Jun 25, 1959 - Jun 18, 2006)
By Bernard Savitz, read at funeral

Like so many of you who knew John, I was shocked, deeply saddened, and crestfallen to hear that John was gone. I refused to believe it could be true. How could this be? This couldn’t be true - not John, not our friend John, who we all admired so much for so many reasons.

Just a few days before this I talked and played table tennis with John ten times in two weeks. I couldn’t believe that we would never have a chance to see, or joke, or play with him again. When reality set in, and I realized it was indeed true, I began to think and reflect on the John Schneider that we all knew and loved.

John Schneider was a brilliant man with a great sense of humor, a unique and fascinating personality, despite his often times laconic, quiet demeanor. He was certainly an enigma. He never let you get too close to him - yet, he was witty and charming, and he made everyone in the table tennis community feel comfortable and happy. He was our “Answer Man.” He either knew or soon discovered the answers to all table tennis questions, and we all enjoyed his expertise on all types of equipment from shoes to shirts, blades, and rubber.

John made every table tennis player feel good, whether a novice or an advanced player, and he exemplified fine sportsmanship. He was the most honest of players, but what we all admired most about John was his tenacity and fierce competitive spirit at the table. Despite chronic back pain, John was a ferocious competitor. He never gave up, and he possessed an uncanny will to win, often against overwhelming odds.

He was a multiple national champion, in singles and doubles events, and he won many other titles, in countless venues. John was like the Rocky Marciano of Table Tennis - though he had an unorthodox style, he had the biggest heart and the courage of a lion. He was an inspiration for many of us, and he continues to inspire us, despite how brokenhearted we are.

I was privileged to have a special relationship with John which I will always treasure. It was a relationship that no one knew about. Because I am a Clergyman, John trusted me and shared with me things he didn’t tell anyone else. I never betrayed his confidences, and I will never do so. For over 20 years, I remained friends with John, and we shared countless experiences. I recall how on two different occasions, we drove together to the U.S. Closed [Nationals], and listened to John’s favorite rock music for six straight hours. The other time, John listened to my Cantorial and Operatic tapes for six hours - he really did have a kind heart. One year [at the Nationals] we stayed in the same room and we never even got into an argument that entire week. Another time John came to my home to install and set up my new stereo system that I bought from him. It took him almost seven hours to do so but he enjoyed it.

John made everyone of us feel good in different ways. In my case, I will never forget the many little things that went on between us. For example, John was the first person to ever call me “bozo.” That name stuck to this very day, and no matter where we were, and no matter how long we hadn’t seen each other, we would simply say (when we saw one another) “anything else?” Shaking hands after a match, giving away the serve after winning the serve, getting John to give me half a banana or one of his beloved Gatorades - these were just a few of the little things that endeared John to me. John and I shared our fondness not only for Table Tennis but for music, animals, comedy, and grammar as well.

But more than anything, when I play table tennis now, I think of John on almost every shot. I can’t get him out of my mind, or his infectious laugh, or his witty comments; and I can’t forget the enjoyment of playing doubles with and against him, recently, and for so many years. Yet, despite all this, and despite the fact that I am heartbroken over John’s loss, I know that all of us who knew John and played with him have similar stories and similar affections for him. And I know that we’ve been blessed to know John, and that we are all better for having known him.

He embodied so much of our sport, and the drive to win and compete, that we will always continue to admire and cherish his memory. I don’t think he ever realized just how much he was cared about, and how he influenced our own play. John was, in many ways, “Mr. Table Tennis.” No one can ever replace him, and he was unique in style and temperament. It is a tragedy that in the game of life, John had difficulty and inner turmoil. But, he is now at peace, and in no more pain.

I extend my deepest sympathies to John’s family, and thank John’s sister Laurie for her kindness and help. Let me conclude with this:

“John, we will never forget you. We will remember you every time we play and every time someone makes an extraordinary shot. We will remember you whenever we see great tenacity and a winning spirit at the table. John, we will never forget you, and your name will never be forgotten.”

May the soul of John Schneider be bound in the bond of everlasting life. And let us say, “Amen.”
You don’t expect those so essential to running a 242-entry, 33-event, $16,000 prestigious Open to be out there playing, and so I begin by paying homage to those who counted the players and thus insured the success of this 17th annual June 1-4, 2006 tournament. I think particularly of Bill Meiklejohn, our North American Senior’s longtime benefactor; of National Seniors Table Tennis Tournament Association (NSTTTA) Chair, Olga Kahan, that revered Laguna Woods Marchioness, who always looks and acts the part of having been Manchurian-born to “fine-gold” royalty; of software-whiz Craig Krum, ever-ready to spot and stop a conflict; and those he depends on to computer coordinate with—the affable Mas Hashimoto and Draw-provider extraordinaire Marilyn Miller.

I think also of Laguna Woods TTC President Alma Beckerman, and Past Presidents Art Wirtschafter and the ageless Harry Bloom. And I give a thankful nod to sponsors Nittaku and Paddle Palace; and to former USAIT President Terry Timmins who MC’d the Players Party, and who, along with CATT Hall of Fame President Y.C. Lee, Olga, Azmy Ibrahim, and Tom Miller, helped make this year’s Induction Banquet honoring Dennis Davis, John Miller, and Khoa Nguyen so enjoyable.

And while I just said you don’t expect burdened officials to be out on court battle, a quick check shows many of them sure were. Tournament Director Ray Kunze, whacking in balls left and right, knocked me out of the 75’s; NSTTTA Secretary and Chess enthusiast Sun Kahan paired with Don Bourassa to win the Under 2300 Doubles; Eric Aki did conscientious Draw postings and dreamed of judo trials, while his dad Shonie survived a marathon 11, 8, -5, -16, 12 match in the U-1800’s before losing in 5 to finalist Ben Wong; NSTTA Treasurer Walt Wehrli reached the finals of the 75 Doubles; the Honorable Julius Margolis advanced out of his Over 85 event with Michael Jacques. And while I just said you don’t expect burdened officials to be out on court battle, a quick check shows many of them sure were. Tournament Director Ray Kunze, whacking in balls left and right, knocked me out of the 75’s; NSTTTA Secretary and Chess enthusiast Sun Kahan paired with Don Bourassa to win the Under 2300 Doubles; Eric Aki did conscientious Draw postings and dreamed of judo trials, while his dad Shonie survived a marathon 11, 8, -5, -16, 12 match in the U-1800’s before losing in 5 to finalist Ben Wong; NSTTA Treasurer Walt Wehrli reached the finals of the 75 Doubles; the Honorable Julius Margolis advanced out of his Over 85 event with Michael Jacques. And while I just said you don’t expect burdened officials to be out on court battle, a quick check shows many of them sure were. Tournament Director Ray Kunze, whacking in balls left and right, knocked me out of the 75’s; NSTTTA Secretary and Chess enthusiast Sun Kahan paired with Don Bourassa to win the Under 2300 Doubles; Eric Aki did conscientious Draw postings and dreamed of judo trials, while his dad Shonie survived a marathon 11, 8, -5, -16, 12 match in the U-1800’s before losing in 5 to finalist Ben Wong; NSTTA Treasurer Walt Wehrli reached the finals of the 75 Doubles; the Honorable Julius Margolis advanced out of his Over 85 event with Michael Jacques.

Thursday Matches

The tournament opened with a near 20 entries in the U-1100 event, which was won by Whitter’s Kuniko Jessup over New York writer Jim Bergman. Kuniko also came runner-up in the Women’s Over 60’s to Wen Jun Liu who’d advanced out of her round robin with a fine win over Vancouver’s 81-year-old Sonia Fynn, an exuberant Brit turned Canadian, who after a long absence from the Game had begun playing again maybe 15 years ago. So how was this Sonia doing? Pretty good. She shared 3rd in the 60’s with Judy Pelletier, who in the 1100’s had an upset win over Judy Semenza, and took the 70’s from Harriet Brín—with Yuki Mancebo and Thelma Batten sharing 3rd. But, more importantly, Sonia had recently returned from the World Veterans Championships at Bremen, Germany (something like 3,600 entrants) where she’d WON the WORLD OVER 80 CHAMPIONSHIP, and came 2nd in the Women’s Over 80 Doubles. Want to see her medals? I did, and she brought them to me, the gold in one sock, the silver in another. “They’re pretty nice to have,” she said in what had to be the understatement of the weekend.

Frank Buchanan was awarded the Over 90 prize after losing in the 85’s to both Julius Margolis and Harry Ehrmantraut (who shared 3rd Place in that 85 event with Michael Jacques). San Diego Club Treasurer Neil Smyth reports that his home-away-from-home Club has a net worth of $65,000 and that, with the full support of his wife Jan who’s recovering good-humorously from a hip operation, he seems to be there every day checking the books or, hey, maybe playing just a little Pong? Neil, proud wearer of a jacket befitting his Senior Olympic status, won the Over 80’s from Cuong Chi Lam, who’d upset Si Wasserman. Fritz Barseai and Wiley Butler shared 3rd.

Neil also won the 75 Doubles with Byng Forsberg over Dick Peregrine/Walt Wehrli who’d eased out Kahan/Boggan in 5. Everybody knows that Byng, who’s always pressured himself in various sports, and who’d suffered the loss of his dear wife Bobbi Jean in January, is tough-minded. Still, he’d startled everyone by having just come from the hospital where the evening before he’d gone to the ER and been told he had a spot on his lung and pneumonia! But so what. Once, when a doctor told Byng he might have to have a testicle removed, and Byng began telling him about his Senior Games participation.

Other Thursday winners: In the Under 2300’s, Kahan/Bourassa had fun shutting out Bob Johnson/Dana Cheng, 11-0 in the 5th in the semi’s, then 7, 10, 11 (from down 4-10) defeated Ming Chen/Minh Lu who’d sneaked their way by Jessup/Ron Buxton. Tom Nguyen/Tuan Duc Pham ousted Antonio Ching/Asadur Chilingirian in the 2800 Doubles. And in the 38-entry 1450’s, Samy Tran stopped Lee Swander, 5-game advance over Suresh Kanekar.

Friday Matches

Just turned 40, and making a very impressive debut in his first Meiklejohn, Justin Bookey, seeded last in the pre-lim 11 round robins, not only won the U-1200’s over Doug Wolfgram (who’d rallied from two down to beat Walt Blem), but, after defeating Bourassa and Concord’s Ron Buxton in 5, almost took the U-1300’s from Derrick Stockhausen. Derrick was able to claim the title with wins over #1 seed Bill Cooper, Rob Little, and H. B. “Blackie” Barlow who said he unconsciously began “feeding balls” to Derrick as if he were playing his Crestline senior students, then too late (“What are you doing, Blackie?”) came to his senses. In the 75’s, runner-up Leo Egel, who’s used to playing in an SOS gym (Sportsmen of Stanislaus County), sent out a call to self for help and survived Ray Kunze after being behind 2-1 and 6-10 quadruple match-point down in the 4th. Winner Dick Peregrine, behind 2-0, rallied to prevail 11-9 in the 5th over Cuong Chi Lam and his disconcerting turn-of-the-wrist sidespin antispin. George “The Chief” Brathwaite comfortably took the 70’s over Sammy Liang, no longer using his mysterious Z1 pips, and also paired with Neil Smyth to out top seeds Jack Howard/ Boggan in 5 before succumbing in the final to Jack Pham/Bob Johnson.
Women’s Over 50 went to Bella Livshin who with 2, 4, and 3 wins seemingly had an easy time in the final, but look again and you’ll see she had to go 5 with defender Min Ming Zhu. Much as Bella likes to play, she loves even more to coach. She started coaching at 18 in Yalta on the south coast of the Crimea, came to the U.S. in ‘93, and looks to her Russian/English dictionary to express her precise delight when a student tells her, “I played tennis for 20 years and couldn’t lose weight. Now when I play table tennis I feel the pounds slipping off.”

In the Women’s Over 40, Lily Yip advanced over a missing Donna Sakai. (Cause for alarm? for when was the last time she and Dave entered a tournament and failed to show even when Business might have beckoned?) But then, after Livshin and Marina Cravens settled fur 34 and I play table tennis I feel the pounds slipping off."

Best in the 60’s? Che-Him Leung who, after finishing the arthritic Bass in an 18-16 game, proved too strong with his angled-off, two-sided attack in the final for Banjerd Ukapatayasakul (a.k.a. “Bill U”). In the semi’s, Bill had upset “The Chief,” 11-9 in the 5th. George, who’d led 9-5 that last game, praised Bill for his steady, smart play, that Bill’s loosely-held, inverted/pips racket worked a very flat effect on the well-placed ball and he was picking it up too late. George, however, partnered by Loc Ngo, did take the U-4500 Doubles over John Thach Tran/Duglass Younan.

Loc continues to coach a Laguna Woods group of 25-30 players, but his family (he has a sister and 9 brothers) would like him to seriously come into their import/export business (perhaps encouragingly he’s already providing his senior students concerned with their cholesterol count or high blood pressure all the Green Tea they can drink?). Loc says that, after returning to the U.S., he was still bothered by jetlag. He’d been in China for 4 weeks, in Vietnam for 2 more. Now 42 and a U.S. citizen, Loc came to this country 24 years ago, and this recent visit was his first return to Vietnam (at Ho Chi Minh City there were bigger buildings, more people, but, he says, Americans are welcome). Dugglass, who coaches at Malek’s Power Pong Academy, contracted polio, affecting his left leg and hip, when he was 1-year-old. A Class 9 disabled player, he was a member of the U.S. Team at last year’s Pan-Am Games in Argentina, where he won a Bronze and a Silver.

In the Senior Elites, all 8 seeds came through to the quarter’s. One of these was Parviz Mojaverian who, though the Draw sheets I have don’t indicate it, must have played Ajayi Ohore in pre-lims in this event, for, along with quite a few others, I saw the match. It was, in fact, a howl, from the moment Parviz showed up in pink (“Your wife’s shirt and bag?” someone said to him). Both players carried on psychological warfare—combative talk with one another and the audience. After Ohore, down 9-10 in the 3rd, serves into the net, Mojaverian goes up 2-1. But then he doesn’t hold an 8-6 lead in the 4th. In the 5th, Parviz is up 5-4, 8-1. But now A-J begins a rally, repeating the magic mantra, “One at a time!” Unbelievably (“One at a time!”) he wins (“One at a time!”) 8 straight (“One at a time!”) lead to 9-8. Then serves into the net! The spell is broken—Parviz goes up 10-9, and, as is his habit, talks to himself and the audience, says, “I need one more and I’m gonna get it right now.” And he does, for Ohore swings and whiffs. “One more time!” says Parviz triumphantly, shaking his fist at A-J. Of course there’s no umpire—which, considering their illegal serves and fun, in-your-face attitude, is just as well.

The best no-nonsense matches are Lily Yip’s 11-7 in the 5th over Attila Malek, and Loc Ngo’s 5-3, 14, 9 win over New York City Coach Hui Yuan Liu. Loc told me the standard of play in Vietnam was higher than in the U.S. but that he’d managed to beat the #3 player there, so though he’d returned just 5 days ago he must have accelerated faster than he thought to down the 2436-rated Liu. Lily’s jab-hustles and quick off-the-bounce forehands had both Malek and Musa, whom she lost to 8 in the 5th, stretching this way and that. David Zhuang continued to cruise home the winner when Atanda, having hurt his back in extending himself against Lily, decided not to play the final.

Saturday Matches

In the popular (YOU might be paired with a Champion!) 36-entry Draw Doubles, among the money winners were “Blackie” Barlow (1242), Leo Egel (1168), Lee Swander (1441), Ramon Giron (1441), Tom Lambert (1269), and Hiroshi Koshimoto (1393). Of course all were lucky to have strong partners. Chance paired John Thach Tran (2342) with Allen Tran (1313), and, despite both of them being lefties, they took the title from Musa/Barlow in the semi’s and Tuan Le (2299) /Ken Sandberg (1406) in the final. I asked if the Trans were related, and got my answer from Tom Miller: “Am I related to John Miller?”
The Over 50’s saw one big upset: Rodel Valdoria over Brathwaite. George was not too happy about this loss or about some aspects of the tournament he deemed unprofessional. After dropping games to 1963 U.S. Junior Champion Alex Salcido, to former Iranian Team member Alireza Hejazi, and to Mojaverian, currently Senior Director of Pharmacology at a Kansas City, MO company, Malek reached the final. There he met Coach Liu who’d advanced over Lim Ming Chui, after Ming had gotten by Bill U in 5. “Bill doesn’t look dangerous,” said 58-year-old Ming (who’s just married Mei-ling (“Sylvia”) and ought to be on the alert for opportunities to prove himself. “But he takes a long time to serve, and then, when I relax, the ball comes.” Malek was challenged only in the 12-10 2nd game where, when the umpire had first warned Liu then taken an end-game point from him for not throwing the ball up high enough on his serve, Attila said, “Do I have to take this point?” and when the umpire said, “Yes,” Attila deliberately mis-served to balance the score.

Malek took time out to have a long talk with me about the possibilities of his Power Pong Academy approach. Interested schoolchildren 5-12 years of age, in cooperation with their Phys. Ed. teacher, receive attractively-presented folders with detailed information how they might earn Bronze, Silver, and Gold certificates in developing table tennis skills. Parents, note that children pursuing such goals not only have aerobic-activity fun, but “improve concentration and focus,” and “develop confidence and discipline” that will point them on their way to becoming high achievers and winners of college scholarships.

Attila’s concern is not just with students and parents but with the Academy coaches who must make a very good living. Get enough students, show you care that they’re excited over the Sport, and franchised academics are very possible. Attila has big dreams—1,000,000 students, 5,000 schools, 50-state Training Directors. I was very impressed with his proven program and urge like-minded others to contact him by phone (714-549-0925), or online at www.powerpong.org.

The 38-entry U-2400’s yielded John Thach Tran another win—in 4 over Tri Huu Dinh in the quarter’s, by default in the semi’s over Tran Le who’d beaten Ramin Samari 11-9 in the 4th, and in 5 in the final over Rudy Miranda, after Rudy had taken out Qifan Li in the pre-lims, and Lily Yip in 5 in the semi’s. Rudy plays only once a week, but he runs 3-5 miles four times a week and that, he says, keeps his game at a 2200 level. Rudy said that 90% of his play against Lily, whom, fearful of her forehands he tried
to keep blocking, was carried on with his powerful backhand. In the final, though, Rudy made the mistake of predictably going to John's backhand, which would send the ball back to Rudy's far forehand; instead, he should have gone first to John's forehand. Under 3600 Doubles winners were (still another win for him) John Thach Tran/Si Nguyen over Ferdinand Trinidad/Lee Swander 11-9 in the 5th, then over Lily Yip and her apt N.J. pupil Dan Kramer, reportedly in five 11-9 games.

Both the 1800's and 1600's went to nearby Irvine's Xuan Liu. In the 1800's, Xuan was pressed the most, not by finalist Ben Wong who'd had 5-game wins over Aki, Alex Hernani, and Danny Nasi (2-game-down ascendant over Sammy Liang), but by Odo Wang. After going 5 with Tim Nguyen and John Harrington (2-game-down winner over Hui Xianyu), Wang had forced Xuan into the 5th in the semi's. A righty penholder with long pips on the backhand, Odo had been sent overseas on business in 1990 and only a couple of years ago was able to get back to playing. In the 1600's, Allen Tran upset #1 seed Bogdan, Dan Cravens scored a 12-10 in the 5th over Hermani, and Martin Ventura won a 5-gamer over Hieu Pham—but winner Liu didn't drop a game. Runner-up was Moses Lan who'd struggled at the precinct with Ed Cohen, Tong Yu, and Tin Nguyen, after Tin had prevailed 12-10 in the 5th over Brian Bui.

Sunday Matches

Under 4200 Doubles saw a couple of entertaining early matches: Joe Tran/Hung Quoc Nguyen (from down 2-0) won out over Ajayi Oho/Mark Berg; and De Tran/John McCadden persevered to a 6-4, 6-5, 10-12, 10, 12 squeaker over Coach Liu and his pupil Gail Kendall. Gail speaks highly of Coach Liu whom she calls "William"—says he has a "gift for pointing out one thing that corrects five others." He and his son, "Andy," a good player in his own right who helps run their N.Y.C Club and will soon be going to China to train, are both U.S. citizens now. Winners were Musa/Howard Vu over Tran/McFadden in the semi's, and Tri Dinh/Ky Nguyen in the final.

Under 1900's saw righty-penholder Xuan Liu continue his excellent play (with wins over Allen McDermott and Danny Nisi) until stopped by LeRoy Kondo who'd almost been beaten early by Tony Rodriguez. LeRoy (who along with Ray Ming and Alex Salcido turn up in my History books playing in California tournaments 35 or more years ago) finished runner-up to Al Kong, harder than a walnut to crack. Under 4800 Doubles was won by Malek/Tung Phan who'd been stretched to the limit by both Samari/Brathwaite and John Thach Tran/Tuan Le. In the final they beat Musa/Ohore who'd been extended to 5 by Loc Ngo and I presume Tri HUU Dinh (though their ratings don't add up to the 4508 listed on the Draw sheet).

Early 5-game matches in the 2030's had, in the one half, Maung Tin Hutt downsing Ralph Agajanian, and Hung Quoc Nguyen defeating Hutt; and, in the other, Hillaan Simon costing Hiep Hoa Cung. Brent Swanson was the winner, having first gotten over Ming in 5 (after Ray had outlasted Joobian Ataian), and then in the final Salcido.

Among the best early round matches in the Under 2300's were Ataian over Lim Ming Chui; Michael Henry over chopper/pick hitter Yutaka Takahashi; Diane Chen over Tuan Le (11-9 in the 4th when Tuan mis-served); Ming over Salcido; James Therriault (always fun to watch Yutaka Takahashi: Diane Chen over Tuan Le (11-9 in the 4th when Titan was won by Malek/Tung Phan who'd been stretched to the limit by both Samari/Brathwaite and John Thach Tran/Tuan Le. In the final they beat Musa/Ohore who'd been extended to 5 by Loc Ngo and I presume Tri HUU Dinh (though their ratings don't add up to the 4508 listed on the Draw sheet).

In the 3rd, Atanda jumps to 4-1 lead, but after telling himself, "Don't be in a hurry" is quickly caught; 5-7...7-7. Then David goes 8-7 up, YELLS!...9-7 up, YELLS!...10-7 up, YELLS! But Musa is not paralyzed—brings the score to 9-10 as his coachman Ohore sounds encouragement. Then 11-9, and David YELLS! Ah! calling "Time!" runs off. A minute passes, A-J's not back, the crowd buzzes. Musa's imperturbable, is up 4-1 when Ohore returns with a bottleful of drink for his Mansa man. Again it's mid-game tied, and they've played some great counter points—David up at the table, leaning into the ball, and Atanda, back, crouching, top-hopping the ball from either wing. Up 7-5 David makes two errors. Then, at 7-all, serves an edge. Both players smile—such good fellowship, eh? Then David serves into the net. Musa, looping well, moves to 10-8, then goes soft, 10-9. At which point David again serves into the net!

"It's a ballet game," someone says—"2-2." The 5th is close all the way up—with Ohore repeatedly speaking to Musa from the sidelines in his native Nigerian until Kahan yellow-cards him. After it twice appears that David will score on vicious forehands, Musa twice reaches out and each time sensationaly topspins back to eventually win the 8-9 point. He spreads his hands, as if taking a little bow, and the crowd applauds. More acrobatics from Musa who wins the game 12-10 with Zhuang calling "Time!"...for the best 4 out of 7, $1500 1st-prize final.

Zhuang is introduced by umpire Stan Kahan as a 15-time U.S. National Champion; Musa as the 10-time Continent of Africa Champion. David chooses to serve, and when Atanda, looping in balls, goes up 7-2, the crowd howls. "That's the one! I needed that!" followed by a little laughter. It's Musa's turn on his way to winning the 2300's. David has no problem concentrating—he ties it up at 7-all. YELLS! But 8-7 on his way to losing the 2300's. Strong backhand loops bring Atanda to 9-7. But David mounts a forehand attack, and Musa fails to return serve—9-all...10-all. Atanda stretches for a mild forehand counter that seems to go through Zhuang's racket, then backhands in the 12-10 clincher. David quickly retaliates—wins the 2nd 11-3 by banging in Musa's serve.

Under 1900's saw righty-penholder Xuan Liu continue his excellent play (with wins over Allen McDermott and Danny Nisi) until stopped by LeRoy Kondo who'd almost been beaten early by Tony Rodriguez. LeRoy (who along with Ray Ming and Alex Salcido turn up in my History books playing in California tournaments 35 or more years ago) finished runner-up to Al Kong, harder than a walnut to crack. Under 4800 Doubles was won by Malek/Tung Phan who'd been stretched to the limit by both Samari/Brathwaite and John Thach Tran/Tuan Le. In the final they beat Musa/Ohore who'd been extended to 5 by Loc Ngo and I presume Tri HUU Dinh (though their ratings don't add up to the 4508 listed on the Draw sheet).

In the one semi's, Kuok advanced to the final via a 13-11 in the 5th over Miranda who'd knocked out the non-stop, always-in-a-hurry-to-play Qian Li in 5 in the quarter's, Parviz Mozijianer, meanwhile, came from down 2-0 to escape Hank McCoulum, followed with a 4-game win over Tung Phan, then, in his semi's, with encouragement from Hejazi and Samari, came from behind 2-0 again to 9, 10, 9 do in Diane Chen. How'd he fare against Kuok in the final? Well, first he asked to see proof of age. Joey looked so young—was he really, 40? A senior? Then, tired, he offered to split half the prize money. But, as Joey had beaten 57-year-old Parviz in straight games earlier in the 2400's, he of course wanted to play. Believe it or not, Parviz came from down 2-0 still again to 11, 9, 6 climax a great $400 win.

The audience enjoyed the early 5-game matches in the Over 40's: Hejazi over David Rubin; Joobian over Dinh Nguyen; Tung Phan over Chui (said Ming, "I was up 7-4 in the 5th...then hit a few crazy balls"), and especially Musa over Diane Chen when, after winning the 4th 12-10, Diane was at 5-all in the 5th—with $1,000 or so in the offing. Last year, Diane was a penholder pair attacker; this year she'd switched to shakehands with one side smooth, one side spins. Maybe, like Lily, Atanda hadn't taken her seriously enough? Did he know World Champion Kong Linghui's father had been her coach? Anyway, it may be that Atanda listened to his coach, Ajayi Ohore, who was pleased with him to serve underspin not topspin balls to her. Anyway, Musa played the last critical points fearlessly and deserved to win.

Two of the most interesting late-round matches were Malek 13-11 in the 5th over Henry, then despite leading 1-0 and 10-6 against Yip who looked about-to-break, it was Malek who tired, said his legs gave, and he lost in 4. Dr. De Tran who, having finished his round of patients for the day in order to catch a 6 p.m. flight from New York, felt his Sunday play was worth the trip when, natty in red shirt/red sneakers, he 11-9 in the 5th managed to reach the semi's over Coach Liu. Neither Musa (over Lily) nor Defending Champion David Zhuang (over Tran) were in semi's danger. So, while final matches were finishing up in other events, chairs were brought in for spectators gathered round the now singularly focused-on table for the best 4 out of 7, $1500 1st-prize final.
Alabama Teams Championships

Anniston, AL - May 20, 2006
By Michael Wetzel | Photo by Michael Wetzel

The top-seeded Mr. Sushi team of Ernesto Kawamoto and David Landry gobbled up the competition to claim the $402 first prize in the inaugural Alabama Teams Championships. Landry went undefeated, dropping only three games throughout the day in the 16-team event. Mr. Sushi stopped the Spintech team of Bill Mobley and Jason Denton 3-0 in the final. Spintech picked up $214.

Finishing third was the Robbins Table Tennis Specialties team of Olivier Demeneuf, Chip Patton and Michael Wetzel.

BumperNets of Birmingham (Adam Brown, Duke Stogner, Chris Jackson) defeated Chik-Fil-A of Anniston (Barry Putman, Mike Harris) in the Class A final. BumperNets, the tournament’s second seed, suffered two upsets in the preliminaries and failed to qualify for the championship division.

The Smashers (Chris Batt, Ashraf Muhammad and Praveen Viswanthan) won Class B and $187 over Crispy Duck (Torin Alter, Mark Scala, $94), and Praveen Viswanthan) won Class B and $187 over Crispy Duck (Torin Alter, Mark Scala). Kawamoto ($80) d. Duke Stogner ($40), 21-11,21-7. Kawamoto and David Landry 3-0 in the final. Spintech picked up $214.

Second Annual New York State Open

Locust Valley, NY - June 3, 2006
By Jerry Mintz

The second annual New York State Open Championship was held at the Grenville Baker Boys and Girls Club in Locust Valley, New York. It is primarily a junior tournament, with one open event. This was the second tournament at the club this year. Eighteen juniors participated, from age 7 to 14.

In the Open, Coach Jerry Mintz was given a scare by Frank Zangari who forced the match to five games. The tournament was organized primarily by the students, who run the table tennis club democratically, within the Boys and Girls Club. Cussie Bluhmagen, 11, was a surprise runner-up to Kaylyn Olivera in Junior Girls, which featured Kaylyn and Yahaira Fidel, who were both in the top 15 USATT girls in Under 10 last month.

Robby Converse won the New York State Under 18 championship for the second year in a row.

Butterfly MDTTC June Open

Gaithersburg, MD - June 3-4, 2006
By Wei Xiao

The Butterfly MDTTC June Open saw Players from MD, VA, PA, DC and VT compete for eight events at the Maryland Table Tennis Center. The Open was very competitive due to Han Xiao’s absence (training in China). In the preliminary rounds, there were no upsets in the three groups. However, top seed John Wetzler (2285) had to fight very hard (training in China). In the preliminary rounds, there were no upsets in the split. 

John Wetzler needed six games to beat Peter Li in the other semifinal. Wilson Liu, a professor from James Madison University, won the Open. The final was between the top two seeds, Peter Li and Raghu Nadmichettu, with local David Goldstein and Johnny Truong winning the two trophies, with local David Goldstein and Johnny Truong winning the two trophies, with local David Goldstein and Johnny Truong winning the two trophies.

The tournament was organized primarily by the students, who run the table tennis club democratically, within the Boys and Girls Club and the IMWRF. Tournament directors were Mike Harris and Anniston Army Depot and the IMWRF.

The top two from each group advanced into the quarterfinals, the semifinals five games. However, top seed John Wetzler (2285) had to fight very hard (training in China). In the preliminary rounds, there were no upsets in the split. 

In the Open, Coach Jerry Mintz was given a scare by Frank Zangari who forced the match to five games. The tournament was organized primarily by the students, who run the table tennis club democratically, within the Boys and Girls Club. Cussie Bluhmagen, 11, was a surprise runner-up to Kaylyn Olivera in Junior Girls, which featured Kaylyn and Yahaira Fidel, who were both in the top 15 USATT girls in Under 10 last month.

Robby Converse won the New York State Under 18 championship for the second year in a row.

In Sunday’s events, Matt & Zach Jarrett (father and son) from PA reached the U1400 and U1150 finals, respectively, and got second-place trophies, with local David Goldstein and Johnny Truong winning the two events. Wilson Liu, a professor from James Madison University, won the U1900 event, and Carson Truong the U1650 event.

Open - Final: John Wetzler d. Raghu Nadmichettu, 5-8,10-7,14; SF: Wetzler d. Peter Li, 8-7,5-7,9,4; Nadmichettu d. Nazruddin Asgaralli, 8-6,6,8; QF: Nadmichettu d. Joseph Wang, 2-6,6,7,1; Li d. Charlene Liu, 6,9,7,-7,8, Wetzler-bye; Asgaralli-bye

U1250 - Final: Raghu Nadmichettu d. Peter Li, 16-7,6,9; SF: Nadmichettu d. Khurram Aziz, 5,5,6; Li d. Joseph Wang, 9,6,8

U1200 - Final: Khurram Aziz d. Julian Waters, 6,11-5,7; SF: Aziz d. Bernard Nkouine, 6,6,7, Waters d. Reginald Willis, 8,8,8,8

U1950: Stephen Hochman d. Jimmy Pappadeas, 10,-7,6,10

U1900: Wilson Liu, 4-0; 2nd Rohit Dewan, 3-1

U1650: Carson Truong d. Vikash Saliu, 6-6,9.-8,7

U1500: David Goldstein d. Matt Jarrett, 9,7,8

U1150: Johnny Truong d. Zach Jarrett, 3,9-14,9

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • September/October 2006
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c
ears ago, when my sister and I used to attend pre-Junior
Olympics qualifying tournaments in New York, we would arrive
by Sean Adachi, another attacking penholder rated 1814, losing two games
to tie the games 3-3. Robert tried to rally, but the mighty Samson pulled
throughout the tournament, defeating both the
top-seeded Mi Li (2144) from Colorado Springs
and the second seed Matt Winkler (2079)
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Although juniors no longer need to qualify to participate in the
national Junior Olympics, this year on June 3-4, given the opportunity, over
50 juniors from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts
signed up to compete in a Junior Olympics warm-up competition. Held
at the New York Table Tennis Club in Flushing, Queens, the tournament
followed the same format as the Junior Olympics, and AAI Championship
medals were awarded to the top three winners in each event.

The tournament director, Steve Slaback, allowed discount entries into
the Open for players under 1900. Dave Pech, 1512, took advantage of this
offer and as low seed was pitted against the might of Samson. Dave, after
losing 2,2,1,5, face aglow and eyes glittering, exclaimed, "Wow, what a
thrill!" That summed up the whole tournament.

Open: 1st Samson Dubina; 2nd Don Hamilton
Over 40: 1st Robert Chen Wong; 2nd Steinman El-Hallal
Over 55: 1st Todao Inui; 2nd Jimmie Taylor
Under 16: 1st Chan Bu; 2nd Keith Pech; 3rd Brian Simcox
U2375: 1st John Tannehill; 2nd Steinman El-Hallal
U2125: 1st Chen Wong; 2nd Ravi Dabburi
U2000: 1st Chan Bu; 2nd Roy Dietz
U1875: 1st Jason McAlister; 2nd Jon Jorgensen
U1750: 1st Adebisi Aidesiyan; 2nd Al Fish
U1625: 1st Greg Smith; 2nd Jimmie Taylor
U1500: 1st Bill Lisboa; 2nd Matthew Forsythe
U1350: 1st Paul Miller; 2nd Craig Jones
U1200: 1st Matt Fullen; 2nd Dale Howell
U1000: 1st Dale Howell; 2nd Brent Townsend
Unrated: 1st Brindt Townsend; 2nd Michael Weisgarber
U3600 Doubles: 1st Johar/Adengada; 2nd Maskey/Jorgensen

It is incredible to see the increased enthusiasm for the sport among
juniors in the tri-state area, and to see how competitive it has become in
an area where it was once lacking. The more experienced juniors were
able to reap the rewards of their hard work, while many novice players
competed in their first tournament and got a glimpse of what they can
achieve with a bit more practice and experience under their belt. Thanks
to all the parents and coaches who are giving their kids this opportunity,
and congratulations to all of the winners:

Under 22 Boys: 1st Andy Liu; 2nd Omar Mace
Under 22 Girls: 1st Colleen Lee
Under 18 Boys: 1st Ivan Quek; 2nd Yi-Jiang Wu; 3rd Xing Xiong
Under 16 Boys: 1st Tanyo Sakuraba; 2nd Kevin Le; 3rd Michael Landers
Under 16 Girls: 1st Alison Wu; 2nd Dachel Martinez
Under 14 Boys: 1st David Katz; 2nd San Godoy Jr.; 3rd Fulton Hou
Under 14 Girls: 1st Isabella Chen; 2nd Ka Po (Anna) Ho; 3rd Crystal Torres
Under 12 Boys: 1st Boson Wu; 2nd Nathan Hsu; 3rd Rocky Zhang
Under 12 Girls: 1st Annie Guo; 2nd Nicole Jan Kunka; 3rd Stephanie Santiago
Under 10 Boys: 1st Xiaotian Jin Zhang
Under 10 Girls: 1st Myeena Zhang; 2nd Michelle Liang; 3rd Deja Williams
Under 22 Boys' Doubles: 1st Kevin Lee/Ivan Quek;
2nd Mark Croitoro/Emile Goldstein; 3rd Yi-Jiang Wu/Xing Xiong
Under 22 Girls' Doubles: 1st Isabella Chen/Alison Wu;
2nd Colleen Lee/Dachel Martinez
Under 14 Boys' Doubles: 1st Sam Godoy Jr./David Katz;
2nd John Hsu/Nathan Hsu; 3rd Benny Deng/David Jiang
Under 14 Girls' Doubles: 1st Isabella Chen/Ka Po (Anna) Ho;
2nd Annie Guo/Nicele Jan Kunka; 3rd Stephanie Santiago/Crystal Torres

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Sacramento Summer Open
Rosemont High School • Sacramento, CA • July 22, 2006
By James Therriault | Photo by Kingston Gee

The two main stories at this tournament was the incredible turnaround by Barney J. Reed to win the Open Event, and the terrific play of a returning hardbat specialist from the Reisman era, Robert Palgon.

In the Open Final, our top seed Stefan Feth (2718), led 2-0 in the best of five final, and 10-5 match point in the third. Then Barney (2564), came to life, running off seven straight points! With the change of momentum, Barney took the next game, 11-7, and dominated the last game 11-2. Although the loop exchanges delighted the crowd and each point it seemed could have gone either way. But the $500 first prize went to Barney this time, who over a year ago hid just tile opposite happen in Sacramento, when Ludovic Gombos came back from 0-2 and match point down to beat Barney! The key to playing so well, according to Barney, was training without the glue week before to develop his touch, and then add explosiveness when he did glue at the tournament.

Robert Palgon (829), placed second in Hardbat to our defending Hardbat Champ Scott Gordon, and then proceeded to play phenomenal against any and all sponge players. He nearly took the top seed in Under 2000, Wayne Lo, before finally succumbing in five games, as Wayne went on to take the event. Scott was impressed by his fellow hardbat player Robert as he began by beating all the same "kids" that beat him last tournament.

Add explosiveness when he did glue at the tournament.

(Sacramento) Scott Gordon d. Robert Palgon, 3-2
(Under 2000) Wayne Lo d. Scott Gordon, 3-1
(Under 1500) Homa Wong d. Calvin Au, 3-1
(Under 1250) Brian Pak d. Robert Palgon, 3-0
(Under 1000) Justin So d. Erinn O'Neill, 3-1
(Under 750) Harsha Lokavarapu Parth Upadhyay, 1-2
(Under 625) Homa Wong d. Calvin Au, 3-1
(Under 375) Jacqueline Labins d. Neeraj Chandra, 3-2
(Under 250) Karina Wahlman d. Casey Kong, 3-1
(Under 2750 Doubles) Dave Medd d. Pat Castro/Barry Or (Milpitas), 3-2
(Under 2300 Doubles) Brian Cohen/Charlie Guillibault (Chico) d. Curt Stokes/Erin O'Neill (Chico), 3-2

Western Open Canada Championships
Eagle River Alaska Table Tennis Club
By Andy Hutzel, Secretary

Seven Alaskans made the long difficult journey (not as difficult as the early Klondike Gold Rush prospectors) to Whitehorse, Yukon, Territory, Canada this past weekend to compete in the Western Canada Open Table Tennis Championships. They were: Diann Darnall (Fairbanks); Wesly, Jim, and Ruth Ann Bowman (Juneau); Shirley & Boyd Bennett, and Andy Hutzel (Eagle River).

Saturday consisted of a round robin team competition (top four players from each province) between British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Yukon. Unfortunately we were not able to put together an Alaskan team. Each province team consisted of the top four men and women players from that area. I believe this tournament had more table tennis talent, within the men's and women's teams, than I've ever seen in one city (Whitehorse) with less than 20,000 people.

The Western Canada Open Table Tennis Tournament was a "test run" for the upcoming Canada Games (similar to the Arctic Winter Games) to be held in Whitehorse during March/April 2007. The tournament director, Dave Stockdale, received a grant of $19,000 to put on this tournament. (Can you believe it?) Dave paid for the Canadian team players' (men/women/coaches) flights to Whitehorse, paid for a rental car for each team, paid for hotel rooms, provided lunch for everyone, and the tournament banquet.

I believe I speak for all Alaskan participants that "we all found gold in the Klondike." Everyone at the tournament, and in Whitehorse, was very friendly and their hospitality, just like the table tennis play, was at the highest level possible.

As most of you know I can really get into details (and long emails) regarding a table tennis tournament, so I'll get to the "sweet spot" of my information. Men's Team British Columbia, with Zhen Wang (arguably #2 in Canada) won their division. Women's Team Alberta, with Joulia Degtiar (#12 in Canada) won the women's division. Zhen and Joulia also won the Men's & Women's A Division singles.

Once again, Diann Darnall (Fairbanks) mined for the precious "metal" better than the Alaskan men. Diann earned the gold medal in Women's Open B Division, where she later said, "I "long-pipped" my opponent to death in the final. Diann took the Silver medal in the Under 800 (Canadian rating points) Division and then teamed up with Boyd Bennett (78 years old Alaskan Hall of Fame Inductee from Eagle River) to take the Bronze medal in Under 1600 Doubles. I earned a Silver medal in the Over 50 Open and another Silver medal in the Men's Open B Division.

Alaskans took home more medals than Team Yukon. We are beginning to reap the rewards of traveling to various tournaments "outside."

Another piece of "gold" we found in Whitehorse is a player/coach originally from Hong Kong, now living, playing, and coaching in Vancouver, Canada. Mr. Danny Ho has twice been on the Canadian Team, twice Canadian Senior Champion, Canada Summer Olympic Champion, numerous times British Columbia Single & Top 12 Champion, and a certified profession coach. Danny's USATT rating is 2359, which speaks for itself. Our current top rated player in Alaska is rated 1898. Danny is interested in visiting Alaska and coaching our players. We are in the process of finalizing the details of his coaching visit.

Just when I thought we were slowing down for the summer, along comes an opportunity to receive high-level coaching. Oh well, what did Forrest Gump say about life and chocolate...?

Hope you "catch an edge once in awhile."
## USATT Tournament Results

### Davison May Open
**Davison, MI • May 27, 2006**

**Open:**
- 1st Dennis Cobb; 2nd Ivan Popov; 3rd Tesi Iloh
- U2250: 1st Ivan Popov; 2nd Dennis Cobb; 3rd Tesi Iloh
- U2100: 1st Tesi Iloh; 2nd Jim Keep
- U1750: 1st Jim Keep; 3rd William Thomson
- U1650: 1st Teymour Sepahbod; 2nd Lorenzo Scales
- U1550: 1st Teymour Sepahbod; 2nd Fred Dunlap
- U1450: 1st Fred Dunlap; 2nd Lorenzo Scales
- U1350: 1st Lorenzo Scales; 2nd Mel Rodriguez

**Class C:**
- 1st Michel Robby; 2nd Keith Peterman Dailey

**Class B:**
- 1st Logan Rudemiller; 2nd Tommie Baldwin

**Class A:**
- 1st Warren MeNeil; 2nd Vijay Bulusu; 3rd Warren McNeil/Chuck Outlaw

**Open:**
- 1st Augusto Bertone; 2nd Aldis Presley; 3rd Willy Leparulo

**PHotos:**
- David Cobb/Michael Shieh

### Maryland June Circuit
**Eldersburg, MD • June 10-11, 2006**

**Open:**
- 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Steve Hochman
- Over 40: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Mark Davis
- Over 50: 1st Rohan Gilkes; 2nd Dave Jarrin
- Over 60: 1st Rohan Gilkes; 2nd Gavav Mantri
- Over 70: 1st Gavav Mantri; 2nd Phil VanDusen
- U1500: 1st James Zahn; 2nd Gary McCon; 3rd Mary Staehlin
- U1800 Doubles: 1st Dominique Flexer/Julian Waters; 2nd Phil VanDusen/Dave Jarrin
- U2800 Doubles: 1st Gary McCon/Mike Branch; 2nd Bill VanWright/Marty Staehlin

**Ocala Open**
**Ocala, FL • June 17, 2006**

- Championship: 1st Patrick Anderson; 2nd Christopher Brown; 3rd Werner Stollemmeier; 4th Richard Johns
- Elite: 1st Chedy Munroe; 2nd Robert Ashmeade; 3rd Barry Scott; 4th John Shultz
- Master: 1st Jose Borges; 2nd Jim Weisbecker
- Expert: 1st Jermaine Bennett; 2nd Jonathan Hemingway

**Advanced:**
- 1st Gene Warden; 2nd Ken Riggs

**Davison June Open**
**Davison, MI • June 24, 2006**

- Open: 1st Scott Endicott; 2nd Dennis Cobb; 3rd Danny Dulk
- U2250: 1st Dennis Cobb; 2nd Danny Dulk
- U2100: 1st Allen Lin; 2nd Jim Keep
- U1950: 1st Stanley Carra; 2nd Allen Lin
- U1850: 1st Stanley Carra; 2nd Dave French
- U1750: 1st William Thomson; 2nd Stefan Mitrozi
- U1650: 1st Stuart Caplin; 2nd Sumodh Nair
- U1500: 1st Joe Maher; 2nd Bill Patterson
- U1450: 1st Keith Sroock; 2nd Fred Dunlap
- U1200: 1st Paul Wandrei; 2nd Kevin Schrock

**Penascoa Spring Open**
**Pensacola, FL • June 10, 2006**

- Open: 1st Augusto Beretone; 2nd Aldis Presley; 3rd Willy Leparulo
- Open Doubles: 1st Augusto Bertone/Aldis Presley; 2nd Warren McNeil/Chuck Outlaw
- Class A: 1st Warren McNeil; 2nd Vijay Balusu; 3rd Mark Pryler
- Class B: 1st Logan Rudemiller; 2nd Tommie Dailey
- Class C: 1st Michel Robby; 2nd Keith Peterman
- Class D: 1st Herb Bennett; 2nd Jose Bocanegra
- Class E: 1st Melvin Coulon; 2nd Weiming Zhao

**STTC 20th Anniversary Open**
**Schaumburg, IL • June 24, 2006**

**Class A:**
- 1st Lukasz Fita; 2nd Agnieszka Chrzaszcz
- 3rd Engelbert Solis

**Class B:**
- 1st Dobrivoj Kljaic; 2nd Jianan (John) Bian; 3rd Ed Houghhead

**Class C:**
- 1st David Chan; 2nd Dilip Shah; 3rd Jim Weilhend

**Class D:**
- 1st Keith Wong; 2nd Kent Shum

**Class E:**
- 1st Ryan Browne; 2nd Jeff Schiff

**Class F:**
- 1st Deepak Somunappu; 2nd Benjamin Gross

**Class G:**
- 1st Dariel Koscielski; 2nd Brian Weiland

**Class H:**
- 1st Scott Peckler; 2nd Wesley Chan

**Maryland July Circuit**
**Eldersburg, MD • July 8-9, 2006**

- Open: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd David Jarrin
- Over 40: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Grigory Yasinov
- U2000: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Gavav Mantri
- U1800: 1st John Zydell; 2nd Grigory Yasinov
- U1700: 1st Phil VanDusen; 2nd Darryle Boyer
- U1500: 1st Darryle Boyer; 2nd Steve Buckle
- U1300: 1st Marty Staehlin; 2nd Mike Johnson
- U3600 Doubles: 1st Julian Waters/Phil VanDusen; 2nd Yvonne Konlage/Tran Golab
- U2800 Doubles: 1st Yvonne Konlage/Marty Staehlin; 2nd Mike Johnson/Bill VanWright

**30th Annual Georgia State Games**
**Atlanta, GA • July 15-16, 2006**

- Men's Singles: 1st Didi De Souza; 2nd John Mar; 3rd Augusto Bertone
- Women's Singles: 1st Sue Mae Gob
- Open Doubles: 1st Augusto Bertone/Aldis Presley; 2nd Didi De Souza/Sue Mae Gob;
- 3rd Michael Levene/John Mar
- Over 40: 1st Michael Levene; 2nd Kareem Olugbenga;
- 3rd Charles Bulger
- Under 18: 1st Peter Huang; 2nd Michael Presley; 3rd Paul Birdsong
- Under 16: 1st Ming Yang; 2nd Di Ding;
- 3rd Abhi Reddy
- Under 18 Doubles: 1st Ding/Peter Huang; 2nd Paul Birdsong/Abhi Reddy
- Hardbat: 1st George Cooper; 2nd Jeffrey Klein
- Class A: 1st Michael Lalvani; 2nd Paul Singh
- Class B: 1st Jonathan Hemingway; 2nd Jun Wang
- Class C: 1st David Hjelmeland; 2nd Blair Wilson
- Class D: 1st Peter Huang; 2nd Luis Olivera
- Novice: 1st Tyler Wright; 2nd Brad Lunsford

**Georgia Cup**
- 1st Ben Hill (Didi De Souza, Capt., Aldis Presley, Sue Mae Gob, Augusto Bertone); 2nd AJCC (Myron Bloom, Capt., Liang Tan, Patrick Timoh, Derrick Mumah, Pert O’Stroby); 3rd CATTC (George Cooper, Capt., Eugene Utsalo, Kurt Simmons, Scott Fuller)

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At the STTC 20th Anniversary Open (L-R): Agnieszka Chrzaszcz, Lukasz Fita, Engelbert Solis

At the STTC 20th Anniversary Open (L-R): Dan Iman, Scott Peckler, Wesley Chan

PHOTOS: FROM WWW.SEVENSTAR.COM; ©2006
ITTF VOLKSWAGEN Korean Pro Tour
Jeonju, KOR • June 1-4, 2006
Men's Singles - Final: Joo Se Hyuk (KOR) d. Damien Eliot (FRA), 5-10,5,5,7; SF: Joo d. Chen Weixing (AUT), 8-6,2,4,12; Eliot d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), -4,5,9,9,-5,9; QF: Oh d. Kim Jung Hoon (KOR), 8,4,9,6; Eliot d. Lim Jae Hyun (KOR), -9,9,-9,10,8; Chen d. Cho Eon Rae (KOR), -6,5,-8,6,10,7; Joo d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 9,6,8,9,6.

Women's Doubles - Final: Cheung Yuk/Leung Chu Yan (HKG) d. Thomas Keinath/Lars Hielsher (GER), -8,-6,2,4,12; Eloi d. Lim d. Wang Yue Gu (SIN), 5,6,-9,6,5; SF: Tie d. Yoon Jae Young (KOR), -8,-7,8,7,11.9, d. Aya Umeniura (JPN), 8,6,-10,10,-4,-6,4. d. Park Mi Young (KOR), 8,9,-6,7,6:7,9.13.7,-7,5,9.

Wang (KOR). 8,-9,3,10,6, SF: Tie/Yana (USA) d. Ma Lin/Hao Shilai (CHN).

ITTF Chinese Taipei Pro Tour
Taipei, TPE • June 8-11, 2006
Men's Singles - Final: Oh Sang Eun (KOR) d. Christophe Legout (FRA), 10-8,6,6,9,9,9; SF: Oh d. Joo Se Hyuk (KOR), 9,7,-9,6,2; Legout d. Kim Jung Hoon (KOR), 6,6,-9,9,3; QF: Oh d. Lim Jae Hyun (KOR), -12,9,7,2,-5,4; Joo d. Chuan Chih-Yuan (TPE), 2,7,5,2; Legout d. Bastian Steger (GER), 8,9,-11,-8,15,9; Joo d. Chuang Yu (HKG), 4,5,4,6.

Women's Doubles - Final: Lee Jin Kwon/Ryu Seung Min (KOR) d. Seiya Kishikawa/Jun Mizutani (JPN), -10,-3,7,5,4,7; SF: Liu d. Kim Jung Hoon/Oh Sang Eun (KOR), -8,-7,6,9,11,10; Kishikawa/Mizutani d. Takanori Shimoyama/Yuichi Tokiyoshi (JPN), 7,7,-11,4,10,5.

Women's Singles - Final: Joo Se Hyuk (KOR), 9,7,-9,6,2. Legout d. Kim Christophe Legout (FRA). 8,-7,10,3, Lee d. Chuan Jung Hoon (KOR), 6,6,-9,9,3. QF: Oh d. Lim d. Wang Yue Gu (SIN), 5,6,-9,6,5. SF: Tie d. Yoon Jae Young (KOR), -8,-7,8,7,11.9, d. Aya Umeniura (JPN), 8,6,-10,10,-4,-6,4. d. Park Mi Young (KOR), 8,9,-6,7,6:7,9.13.7,-7,5,9.

ITTF LIEBHERR Chile Pro Tour
Santiago, CHI • June 28- July 2, 2006
Men's Singles - Final: Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) d. Robert Gardos (AUT), -9,8,-5,9,7,10; SF: Samsonov d. Peter Sereda (SVK), 5,9,8,8; Gardos d. Joao Monteiro (POR), 4,3,12,-9,7; QF: Samsonov d. Lee Jin Kwon (KOR), 3,11,5,-8,6; Sereda d. Ferenc Pasy (HUN), 7,10,9,-5,5; Monteiro d. Petr Korbel (CZE), 9,11,4,11; Gardos d. Chen Weixing (AUT), -8,4,3,-7,9,7.

Women's Singles - Final: Chen Weixing/Robert Gardos (AUT) d. Ferenc Pasy/Bojan Tojic (HUN/SVN), 8,8,5,12; SF: Chen/Gardos d. Christophe Legout/Rodolphe Despres (FRA), -9,9,-5,10,-7,9,-4; Pasy/Tojic d. Christian Larsen/Christoffer Petersen (DEN), 8,4,10,4.

Women's Doubles - Final: Park Mi Young/Reiko Hirua (KOR), 5,5,-7,9,4,10; SF: Park d. Ai Fujinuma/Fukuyama d. Sayaka Hirano/Reiko Hirua (JPN), -9,7,-12,6,6,9; Jee/Kwak d. Veronika Heine/Hee Jung Hoon (KOR), 7,6,7,6,10,8.; 16ths: Gao Jun (USA) d. Wang Nan (CHN) d. Lee Eun Hee (KOR), 7,8,9,11.

Women's Doubles - Final: Ai Fujinuma/Ai Fukuyama (JPN) d. Jee Min Hyung/Kwak Bang Bong (KOR), -9,3,9,11,5; Fujinuma/Fukuyama d. Sayaka Hirano/Reiko Hirua (JPN), -7,12,6,6,9; Jee/Kwak d. Veronika Heine/Lee Jia (AUT), 7,6,7,6.

Women's Singles - Final: Haruna Konishi (JPN) d. Rui Shiho (JPN). -8,3,3,7,8,-8,-9.12. Fujinuma/Bai Yaya/Reiko Hirua (JPN), 8,7,9,10,3; Lee d. Peng Zhang (CHN), 10,9,8,12.

Women's Doubles - Final: Park Mi Young/Reiko Hirua (KOR) d. Reiko Hirua (JPN), 5,5,-7,9,4,10; SF: Park d. Ai Fujinuma/Fukuyama d. Sayaka Hirano/Reiko Hirua (JPN), -9,7,-12,6,6,9; Jee/Kwak d. Veronika Heine/Hee Jung Hoon (KOR), 7,8,9,11.

Women's Doubles - Final: Im Hye Jin/Seo Hyo Jin (KOR) d. Lee Eun Hee/Lee Jia (KOR), -9,9,-5,9,7,10; Park d. An Konishi (JPN), 4,7,6,7; Fujinuma d. Shim Se Rom (KOR), 9,9,-4,3,3; 8ths: Wang Chen (USA) d. Haruna Fukukoua (JPN), 8,3,3,7,8,-9,12.

Women's Doubles - Final: Hiroko Fujii/Saki Kanazawa (JPN) d. Ai Fujinuma/Sayaka Hirano (JPN), 7,10,8,4; SF: Fujii/Kanazawa d. Reiko Hirua/An Konishi (JPN), 8,7,6,10; Fujinuma/Hirano d. Haruna Fukudoku/Mikie Takahashi (JPN), 7,8,9,5.
First off...THANK YOU NCTTA AND THANK YOU USAATT! These two organizations have worked on this together and the U.S. team feels very thankful to them for giving them this opportunity. It was a very enjoyable week for U.S. with not only a very well-run tournament and tough competition, but the chance to meet people from all over the world. The trip started off at JFK airport where most of U.S. Team met before heading to Germany. World Cup soccer fever was definitely noticed at the Frankfurt airport in Germany as match balls were on display, signs of the World Cup in various locations, seats in the design of a soccer ball, and foosball tables everywhere.

We then headed to Karz, Austria which was a short flight from Frankfurt and then went on a one-hour drive to Maribor, Slovenia where the tournament was held. The team event kicked off the tournament and the U.S. men’s team faced top-seeded Chinese Taipei as well as Ukraine and Hong Kong. The U.S. Women’s Team faced Russia, Slovenia, and the Slovak Republic. There was an opening ceremony and a welcome party on the first day.

The U.S. men’s and women’s teams hoped to play with extra pride on July 4, the first day of the tournament. The U.S. presented the team of Adam Hugh, Han Xiao, and Shashin Shodhan to go up against Ukraine to open our tournament. Adam was up first against Juan Katkov who played a typical two-winged European looping game with good touch. Very quickly Adam was down 0-2, losing both games 11-3. Ouch! Han said, “Adam looks so nervous and he’s flat-footed as he’s playing.” However, Adam did turn things around in the third, winning 11-3, but Katkov closed out the match with an 11-4-fourth-game win.

Han was up next against Yevhen Prischepa. Like Adam, Han got off to a bad start and was down 2-0 in games. However, he played much better in the next two games and pushed the Ukrainian to the fifth before losing. Han said, “I couldn’t concentrate until I was down 2-0.” The match featured spectacular counterlooping rallies.

Shashin was up next against Vitaliy Levshin and hoped to put the U.S. on the board. However, the bad starts from the Americans continued as Shashin fell behind 7-0 in the first, 7-0 in the second, and 5-0 in the third. Shashin ended up losing 11-5, 11-8, 11-8 so was outscored 19-0 in the start of the games but then outscored his opponent 21-14 at the end of games. Shashin said, “I probably need to make a mental adjustment as the tournament atmosphere can cause you to play differently and not your regular game. I relaxed and played my game when the result was basically determined.”

Coach Keith Evans thought it would have been a good idea to have the U.S. team come here 2-3 days before the tournament started to get used to the conditions as Adam, Han, and Shashin all got off to bad starts. The U.S. women’s team played Russia and unfortunately, they were outplayed in this match. Katherine Wu put up respectable scores in her match but Laura Leach and Amanda Dubina were beaten convincingly, each losing 3-0 against Russian opposition who ended up well read on!

The U.S. men were up next against Taipei and we expected Chuah Chih-Chi (top 15 in the world) and Chang Yuan-Su (top 50 in the world) to play but they were rested this match. They still brought Wu Chih-Chi to the match who is one of the rising stars on the Pro Tour and now is in the top 150 in the world. He plays for the same club as Timo Boll in the German Bundesliga. Han, Adam, and Pan Lin played in this match. Han posted a five-set victory to open the team tie and in each of the five games, the score was 10-7 at one point in time. Han had the 10-7 lead on four occasions and blew that lead in only the first game.

Next up was Adam against Wu Chih-Chi, a two-winged looper with the typical Asian emphasis on forehand play. Adam played well but lost all three games 11-8. Pan Lin was up next against Su Chu-Yung. Pan led 2-0 and 9-6 in the third but was not the same player after that. Han thinks Pan simply got nervous. Pan lost the third 11-9 and the next two games 11-6 and 11-3 to put Taiwan up 2-1. Next was Han’s turn to see if he could pull off the big upset against Wu Chih-Chi. Han lost 3-0 but the games were close and one of the games he lost he led 9-5. If Pan Lin had won the crucial third match after being up 2-0, 9-6, the U.S. team could have pulled off the upset as Adam was very capable of winning the fifth and final match. The U.S. men finish 0-2 on a day where they felt they could have finished 2-0. U.S. played Hong Kong the next day for third place and we came through with a 3-2 victory.

The U.S. Women played Slovenia in their final match of the first day. Katherine Wu carried the U.S. by winning both her matches. However, Laura Leach was unable to win the crucial third match and Amanda Dubina lost her two matches. Amanda had game points in both her matches. The U.S. Women’s Team played the third-seeded Slovak Republic the next day and lost 3-0 with Amanda Dubina the only American to win a game.

The most exciting match by far was China vs. Russia in the women’s team final. The Russian girls had strong crowd support. Russia had beaten Taiwan in the semifinals, which turned heads. Three of the five matches in the women’s final ended deuce in the fifth with China winning two of the three. One Russian girl was up 9-4 in the fifth against the #1 Chinese girl, and then was up match point in the fifth and final match, but was unable to pull out either win. She was sobbing into her towel after losing that fifth and final match.

In singles, Pan Lin faced one of the strong Korean players and lost easily 3-0. Shashin Shodhan also played one of the top Koreans and gave him some initial trouble as he led 1-0 in games and 7-4 in the second at which point the Korean started dominating. Shashin said, “I couldn’t afford to make mistakes against someone so strong which is what happened after I had the lead and he got confidence from my mistakes.” Han Xiao outscored his Hungarian opponent by 13 points but the match came down to the wire with Han winning 11-8 in the decider. Adam showed his fighting spirit against an Italian player as he was down 0-2 in games and behind 5-8, 9-10 and 10-11 in the fourth but pulled through like Han, he ended up winning 11-8 in the fifth.
When the U.S. team was walking to dinner, the Italian guy shouted from his 3rd floor window, “Hey American boy! ... you have very good...” (pump fist shown by Italian player), so Adam felt happy to have received this compliment from his opponent about his fight.

For the women, unfortunately, Laura Leach and Amanda Dubina each lost all six games they played but Amanda gave trouble to the #2 Chinese girl, Dai Ningyang. Amanda said, “the girl made mistakes when I served topspin to her and that kept working throughout the match.” She lost 8,6,9, which is a very respectable performance against a member of the Chinese table tennis machine. Katherine Wu won her third match of the tournament with a 3-1 victory over Hungarian player A member of the Chinese table tennis machine. Katherine Wu won her third match of the tournament with a 3-1 victory over Hungarian player Timea Viski but lost her second match 3-1 to Sasa Sivec of the home country Slovenia.

On Friday, July 7, the U.S. team played mixed doubles and unfortunately, the three pairings of Adam Hugh/Laura Leach, Han Xiao/Katherine Wu, and Shashin Shodhan/Amanda Dubina were not able to win a match. There was little success for the U.S. in men’s and women’s doubles as well. On Saturday, July 8, we had our remaining singles matches. Han and Adam, who both would have advanced to the main draw with a win, were eliminated by players from the home country Slovenia. Han lost a very close, nail-biting five-set match to Nenad Bojanic in which every game ended either 11-9 or 11-8. Han lost 11-9, 11-8 in the decider. Adam lost to the lefty Ziga Jazbec 3-1. Both their matches were winnable. Shashin lost to Thailand’s Chaisit Chaitat 3-0 (who earlier in the tournament played a five-set match with Taiwan’s Wu Chih-Chi). Shashin had game point in the first. Pan took one game off a good Russian player before falling in four games. Katherine Wu lost to Poland’s Agata Pastor 3-0 and Laura Leach lost 3-0 to a Slovakian player.

When we went to dinner on the last day of the tournament, the Italian and French players were there. The Italians suddenly started banging their utensils on the table and started chanting. As soon as they were done, the French team followed with their own utensil-banging and a chant of their own. They were getting ready for the World Cup final which was to be played in another hour. The Italians ended up winning on penalty kicks which caused the Italian players to break out in cheers and let the French team disappointed.

Throughout the tournament, the team unity of the Asian countries was impressive as their large contingent of players would really pull for each other whenever their teammates was playing, making the atmosphere electric. As for other off-the-table activities and the lighter side of things, we had fun socializing with other countries’ players and went to a couple discos when our tournament was done. Adam was as affected as the French after their World Cup loss. Adam made sure to point out a missed serve by Shashin at match point and a good-natured wrestling match followed. Han got to know an actress. Pim went to Italy to be there for the World Cup final with a friend. Pan got scared by this same friend who came into his room in the middle of the night and Pan shrieked really, really loudly scaring Han and Adam who were in the next room. This trip was very enjoyable and something we would recommend to future collegiate athletes.

We must thank Willy Leparulo of the NCTTA as he was the driving force behind making this happen. He made sure all details and logistics were taken care of and even sacrificed himself by not coming on this trip to cut costs for the players. THANK YOU WILLY! When asked why our top juniors should continue playing during their college years, the NCTTA and USATT have a good reason to tell the juniors now.

USA Men’s Team Results

Ukraine d. USA, 3-0: Juan Katkov (UKR) d. Adam Hugh (USA), 3-3, 3-3; Yevhen Priscnepa (UKR) d. Han Xiao (USA), 8,7,9, 7,7, Vitaliy Levshin (UKR) d. Shashin Shodhan, 5,8,8.

Chinese Taipei d. USA, 3-1: Han Xiao (USA) d. Lai Kuang-Shen (TPE), 11,7,8,9; Wu Chih-Chi (TPE) d. Adam Hugh (USA), 8,8,8; Su Chu-Yung (TPE) d. Pan Lin (USA), 11,9,8,6,3; Wu Chih-Chi (TPE) d. Han Xiao (USA), 8,9,7.

USA d. Hong Kong, 3-2: Chu Hiu Yu (HKG) d. Han Xiao (USA), 6,7,5-5,6; Adam Hugh (USA) d. Tang Ka Chun (HKG), 5,6,13,5; Liu Hiu Ming (HKG) d. Shashin Shodhan (USA), 5,9,12,9; Han Xiao (USA) d. Tang Ka Chun (HKG), 9,12,10,9; Adam Hugh (USA) d. Chu Hiu Yu (HKG), 7,5,7-10.

USA Women’s Team Results

Russia d. USA, 3-0: Anna Tikhomirova (RUS) d. Amanda Dubina (USA), 1,1,4; Julija Prokhorova (RUS) d. Katherine Wu (USA), 4,8,5; Tatiana Mikhaylova (RUS) d. Laura Leach, 2,3,7.

Slovenia d. USA, 3-2: Katherine Wu (USA) d. Petra Skabar (SVN), 11,12,8; Jana Tomazini (SVN) d. Amanda Dubina, 11,5,5; Natalija Luzar (SLV) d. Laura Leach, (USA) 2,0,4; Katherine Wu (USA) d. Jana Tomazini (SVN), 12,5,5; Petra Skabar (SVN) d. Amanda Dubina (USA), 12,5,5.

Slovak Republic d. USA, 3-0: Viktoria Lucenko (SVK) d. Amanda Dubina (USA), 10,5,4,1; Viera Marcecko (SVK) d. Katherine Wu (USA), 6,2,7; Andrea Kubirikova (SVK) d. Laura Leach, 7,8,3.

USA Singles Results

Han Xiao, 1-1: d. Gabor Zombori (HUN), 8,4,3,-9,8; loses to Menad Bojanic (SLV), 9,-9,8,9.

Adam Hugh, 1-1: d. Romualdo Manna (ITA), 8,-6,7,11,8; loses to Ziga Jazbec (SLV), 8,10,9,7.

Shashin Shodhan, 0-2: loses to Yang Dae Keun (KOR), 13,8,6,2; loses to Chaisit Chaitat (THA), 10,6,6.

Pan Lin, 0-2: loses to Kim Tae Joon (KOR), 6,2,6; loses to Viatcheslav Burov (RUS), 4,-6,6,5.

Katherine Wu, 1-2: d. Timea Viski (HUN), 9,9,-13,7; loses to Sasa Sivec (SLO), 3,-6,6,9; loses to Agata Pastor (POL), 3,6,9.

Laura Leach, 0-3: loses to Jiao Yongli (CHN), 3,2,3; loses to Alena Shubina (RUS), 9,4,4; loses to Viktoria Lucenko (SVK), 6,4,5.

Amanda Dubina, 0-2: loses to Andrea Kubirikova (SVK), 5,7,7; loses to Dai Ningyang (CHN), 8,6,9.
Serbia’s Aleksandar Karakasevic Conquers All

BY RICHARD MCAFEE | PHOTOS BY NATT

This year’s U.S. Open Men’s Singles Event will be remembered not for the quantity of top players attending but for the quality of the small field of elite players who match after match put on an exciting show for the spectators.

With this year’s event not part of the ITTF Pro-Tour, the large number of top players who compete on the tour where not present. Add to this the mysterious absence of most of the top U.S. Men, and the early round matches were much weaker than in past years. It seemed very strange not to see the likes of Lupulesku, Zhang, Cheng, Hazinski, Reed, or Adam Hugh playing. It would be left to former U.S. Champion Eric Owens to give the U.S. fans an American to cheer for.

However, it must be pointed out that two International Teams did come and support our event. The National Teams from India and Canada made their mark and a major contribution to the event.

Preliminary Groups

Twenty-four groups fought it out with the winners of each group advancing to the main draw of Men’s Singles. While most of the groups went true to form, there were some interesting developments. First of all, a number of unrated foreign players made an early mark on the event. John Nilsson and Jonas Nordin, both unrated from Sweden, showed excellent form to advance. Nordin defeated Joseph Cochran (2284, IN) to finish first in his group and Nilsson defeated one of the top juniors in the U.S., James Earl Alto (2212, CA) to wrap up his group. Yang Ling-Kun (2309), a very good looking player from Canada, won his group to advance but not without a struggle from Daniel Seemiller Jr. (2083, IN). Another foreign unrated player, Cordova Valencia Santiago (ECU) defeated U.S. Junior Team Member, John Leach (2354, CO) in a real nail-biter, 11-9 in the seventh game. Long-time senior player Jim McQueen (2074, NC), former President of the USATT, scored a major upset to win his group, taking down the current U.S. Over 50 Champion, Jiri Hlava (2284, MA).

First and Second Round Main Draw Matches

As one might expect, most of the first-round matches ran true to form. There were no upsets within the seeded players. However, there were a number of interesting and crowd-pleasing matches. The largest upset of the round had to be Joseph Wang’s (2081, MD) upset of A.J. Brewer, (2303, IN) in a tight match, 5, 6, 13, 7, 14, 8. The crowd really enjoyed the outstanding level of play shown between these two top U.S. junior prospects. On the other end of the age spectrum, many-time World and European Veterans Champion Herbert Neubauer took down Lester Sanjay (2312, GUA). If the name sounds familiar, Neubauer is the inventor of the long-pip rubber that bears his name. Finally, our own Richard Lee, U.S. Open Tournament President, played a very entertaining match against John Nilsson. Richard showed he can still play at a high level by winning the first game and playing very close games throughout.
The second-round matches again provided no major upsets and as expected the top sixteen players all advanced. From here out, the level of play really picked up.

**Eighths**

With the top 16 players all competing against each other, this round was very competitive. For the first time the spectators were able to see the top-seeded players going all out and displaying true world-class skills.

**Aleksandra Karakasevic (YUG) vs. Subhajit Saha (IND)**

The #1 seeded Karakasevic started off like he would make quick work of Saha, taking the first three games at 8,7,9. He was able to absorb the quick attacks of Saha and score at will with strong backhand crosscourt loops. Perhaps it was a little too easy, at he went a little too soft and lost the next two games at 4,9. Great players have the ability to raise their level and Karakasevic is a great player. In game six, he completely shut out Saha by tightening his serve and receive game and opening with very strong loops. The final point was won with a beautiful inside-out, down the line forehand loop. Game and match to Aleksandra 11-3.

**Stefan Feth (GER) vs. Shen Qiang (CAN)**

Qiang is the top junior in North America and made a number of amazing shots this match. However, he never really could get started against the strong short game of Feth and his strong opening loops. Stefan played a technically perfect match and won in straight games, 8,7,6,6.

**Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN) vs. Omar Flores (GUA)**

This was an entertaining match between two athletes that reloop from every corner of the court. There were lots of great looping rallies but Peter-Paul won most of them and the match at 9,1,8,8.

**Sasa Drinic (USA) vs. Sharath Kamal Achanta (IND)**

Sasa is a very experienced and tough opponent but Kamal simply had more power than Sasa could handle. Sasa could work his way into the points well, but time and time again Kamal’s power took its toll. Match in straight games to Achanta, 8,5,5,6. Kamal has been on a roll the last couple of months, winning the Commonwealth Games and reaching the semifinals and quarterfinals of the last two ITTF Pro Tour Events.

**Kostadin Lengerov (AUT) vs. Jens Lang (GER)**

Both Lang and Lengerov are typical European Loopers with good serves and strong attacks from both sides. Lengerov is very experienced at the World Level but has been hampered this year with knee problems. However, he showed no signs of injury as he dominated his opponent from the backhand side and won in straight games, 5,7,13,12.

**Wilson Peng Zhang (CAN) vs. Eric Owens (USA)**

Wilson is the #1 rated Canadian player and showed why this match. He blends power and quickness together into a very dynamic style of play. Eric, who just graduated from college, looked both a little rusty and a step slow this match. However, it is in Eric’s personally to fight hard to the end. Match to Wilson, 2,4,8,8.

**Soumy Adeep Roy (IND) vs. David Jiachen Wang (USA)**

Roy, who is a member of India’s National Team, plays a quick over the table backhand counter and strong forehand loop game. While David was able to take one game, Roy was simply better in every department of the game. Match to Roy, 7,5,6,9,8.

**Thomas Keinath (GER) vs. Jose Miquel Ramirez-Martin (GUA)**

The best description that one can give of Keinath’s game is that he is a never-ending looping machine. Thomas just keeps coming at his opponent not only with strong topspins from both sides but also with the great heart of a champion. Jose fought well but Thomas had too many weapons. Match to Keinath, 6,9,7,3,10.

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**Quarterfinals - A Spectator’s Delight!**

A large crowd got to see four very exciting and well-played quarterfinal matches. Eight players with eight very different playing styles made for a “Spectator’s Delight.”

**Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN) vs. Sharath Kamal Achanta (IND)**

This was a match-up of two members of their respective national teams. Both players play a wide ranging, physical, all-round attacking game. The result was a display of every type of attacking stroke, even some off-the-floor, long range chops by Kamal. In the end, Kamal had a little more forehand power and a great reverse forehand serve, and that made the difference in the match. Despite some great topspin rallies, Kamal overpower Peter-Paul in straight games, 8,7,6,8. Many in the audience were beginning to feel that Kamal may be able to win the title.

**Aleksandar Karakasevic (SCG) vs. Stefan Feth (GER)**

Both of these players compete a lot in the U.S. and both were very popular with the crowd. The first game told the story of the whole match. It quickly became a battle of Feth’s short game and third-ball attack against the more powerful strokes of Karakasevic. Stefan seemed to be
Butterfly once again has pushed the technology envelope to a new level to produce the fastest blade in its line-up, the Boll Tricarbon. Featuring 3-Carbon layers, the Boll Tricarbon offers uncompromising power while still maintaining excellent control. Three layers of Carbon give this blade a huge sweet-spot and explosive power. The outer plies are made up of exotic Padukwood, which is a very fast, dense wood that helps provide even more ball acceleration. If you are a power player that wants the ultimate weapon then the Boll Tricarbon should be your blade of choice. Speed: 11.0, Spin: 6.8
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in real trouble once a counter-looping rally took place as Karakasevic overpowered him time and time again. The key to this match for Stefan was to try and keep the score close. He was able to do this in the first and third games as Karakasevic played a little tighter, not opening with full power. When Stefan lost the third game after having three game points, Karakasevic relaxed and opened up with amazing shots in the fourth. Match to Karakasevic 9-4, 12-8. This match served notice that Karakasevic was playing very well and was focused on regaining the title he held in 2003.

**Souny Adeep Roy (IND) vs. Thomas Keinath (GER)**

This would be the upset of the round and perhaps the tournament, as India’s Roy defeated the #2 seeded Keinath. In the early stages of the match, Roy had the edge in forehand to forehand loop rallies while Thomas was winning many points with his opening backhand loop. The first game was tight all the way with Keinath making a couple of errors at the end to lose 11-9. The second game was all Roy’s as he began to hit through Thomas’s backhand loops and was winning the forehand loop exchanges. He won the game 11-5 to take a 2-0 lead.

**Kostadin Lengerov (AUT) vs. Wilson Peng Zhang (CAN)**

This was to be the best played match of the quarterfinals. From the outset, it was a battle of Lengerov’s power and great backhand loop off the bounce against the quickness and shot making of Zhang. In the first game, Lengerov looked like he might not be able to deal with Zhang’s quickness. Wilson was almost always the first to attack and won the game easily at 11-5. At the beginning of the second game, Lengerov came out determined to loop first and took more risks on the serve return. He also scored many points with backhand loops down the line. Game to Lengerov 11-4. Lengerov continued game three right where he left off the previous game. Scoring over and over with amazing backhand counter-loops off Wilson’s strong opening loops, he ran out the game at 11-5. At this point, it looked like Lengerov might have Wilson’s number. However, Wilson had other ideas. At the start of game four, Wilson took his game and speed to another level and again time pressured Lengerov into making errors and quickly took the game, 11-4. With the games tied at 2-2, game five would prove to be the pivotal one. From the beginning of the game, both players were fighting hard to open first with neither player able to gain more than a one-point lead. At 10-10, a great short serve gave Wilson an ad point and then Lengerov missed a routine forehand loop, to give Wilson the game at 12-10. After pulling out that close game, Wilson was not to be denied, and quickly ran out game six, 11-3, to take the match. Both players received a well deserved ovation from the crowd for their outstanding play.

**Semifinals - One Step From Gold!**

**Sharath Kamal Achanta (IND) vs. Aleksandar Karakasevic (YUG)**

Karakasevic is the number #1 Seed and the highest ranked player in the event at World #44, Achanta, while only ranked #124, has been one of the ITTF Pro Tour’s Hot Players during the last month. Many in the crowd expected this could be an upset in the making.

The first game started out with both players going for winners as quickly as possible. Most points were over by the third ball. Karakasevic finally opened a lead at 8-6 and went on to take game one, 11-8. In game two, Karakasevic starts out winning almost every backhand to backhand exchange and Achanta could not find many opportunities to get in his powerful forehand. This game was all Karakasevic, 11-4.

Achanta is a clever player and in game three he could control the pattern of play from the previous games. He began to handle Karakasevic’s opening loop better and started pushing him off the table by attacking his wide forehand. Game to Achanta, 11-8.

Game four gave the crowd lots to cheer for as both players exchanged great loops. No one could get a lead until Achanta missed his own serve and Karakasevic looped in the next to 9-7. An error by Karakasevic and a great “fake” loop by Achanta brought the score to 9-7. A clever stop block by Achanta fooled Karakasevic and sets up a game point at 10-9. Now Achanta missed a loop, and then made another error on a high ball to give Karakasevic the lead at 11-10. He then foils Karakasevic with a dead serve to deuce the game again at 11-10. Then suddenly, Achanta looped in a serve and gets a break on a net ball to win the game, 13-11.

At the beginning of game five, Karakasevic looked tight and some errors began to creep in his game as Achanta took an early 5-3 lead. At this point Karakasevic executed a series of great blocks against Achanta’s all-out power loops, finally killing the final loop with a backhand punch-block that left Achanta stunned. At this point, you could feel the momentum swing to Karakasevic as he fought his way to deuce. A strong forehand flip serve return gave Karakasevic a match point and when Achanta made a forehand error, Karakasevic wins, 12-10.
Final - One Match to Glory!

Aleksandar Karakasevic (YUG) vs. Wilson Peng Zhang (CAN)

When two strong attacking players such as these meet, the game is often won or lost in the return of service. In game one, Karakasevic is a little more aggressive and creative with his returns, and pulls out a tight 11-9 game.

Game two is a repeat of the previous game as Karakasevic held a small advantage in the short game, allowing him to open first just a little more often than Wilson. At 5-9, Wilson begins to vary the speed and spin on his opening loops which clearly is effective in disrupting Karakasevic’s timing and forces him into a series of errors, giving Wilson the game at 11-5.

Game three found Karakasevic trying to force the attack with even more powerful shots but Wilson’s quickness made that tactic difficult. Wilson takes an early lead 7-3. Karakasevic doesn’t seem able to slow down Wilson’s fast attack nor match his speed. He tries to block Wilson down but only gets a series of ever-faster loops for his effort. Finally, Karakasevic does find a way to score with a series of strong backhand loops out wide to Wilson’s forehand and brings the score to 9-9. At this point, Wilson wins a couple of strong forehand to forehand loop exchanges to win the game 11-9.

At the beginning of game four, Karakasevic continued to attack Wilson’s wide forehand with his backhand and took an early 3-1 lead. The pattern continues as Wilson wins most of the forehand exchanges and Karakasevic scores well with the backhand out wide. Karakasevic holds strong in several long topspin rallies to take a 9-6 lead and runs out the game at 11-7.

With the score tied at two games all, both players came out totally focused at the start of the fifth game and the playing level was very high. At 3-2 for Karakasevic, they played an unbelievable point with Wilson finally winning the point with a massive backhand loop. Neither player can pull away from the other as the score reaches 6-6. Once again, a great counter-looping point brings the crowd to its feet as Wilson finishes it with another great backhand. Wilson rides his spectacular play to a 10-8 lead. Karakasevic then fouls Wilson with a “no-spin” backhand loop to pull to 10-9. However, he then makes a backhand error on a routine ball to give Wilson the game at 11-9.

The high level of play continues in game six. Once again, neither player can pull away as the score reaches 5-all. Karakasevic finally forces some errors from Wilson to go up 10-6. A strong fifth-ball backhand loop wins the game at 11-7.

One Final Game!

Wilson served first and won both his serves as Karakasevic misses two backhand openers. At this point, Wilson began to play even quicker, trying to put Karakasevic under as much time pressure as possible. The strategy works as Wilson takes a 5-1 lead when the players changed ends. At this crucial junction, Karakasevic once again raised his level of play, scoring with two strong backhand loop winners to bring the score back to 5-3. An error by Karakasevic made it 6-3 and then Karakasevic gets an unplayable net to close to 6-4. The players traded points to 7-5. At this point Karakasevic looks tight and misses an easy backhand but then scores with a great one, 8-6 for Wilson. Two strong counter-looping rallies from Karakasevic tied the game at 8-8. Karakasevic has fought his way back into this match, overcoming a 5-1 deficit and now the pressure on Wilson shows as he misses his own serve! Another error from Wilson, this time on a high forehand and Karakasevic has two match points 10-8. Wilson loops in a winner off the serve to close to 10-9. Then in true Karakasevic fashion, he finishes the game and match with a tremendous third-ball backhand loop attack.

It takes the crowd a few seconds to catch their collective breath and to fully comprehend the amazing final that they had just witnessed. Both players had given their all and both received a standing ovation for their play. In the end, Karakasevic showed true grace under pressure as he won the championship with one of the most memorable comebacks in U.S. Open History. Congratulations to Aleksandar Karakasevic, the 2006 U.S. Open Men’s Singles Champion!
ERIC OWENS

Men's Singles Champion

Each product comes with a 30 day money-back guarantee, 1 year warranty and free 5 year service policy.

ALL Models Accept Both 38 and 40mm Balls

Tips & Training

NEW COACHING

WWW.MP

BUILDING TOMORROW

Eric Owens
U.S. Men's Singles Champion

OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES FOR ROBO-PONG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCESSORY</th>
<th>540</th>
<th>1040</th>
<th>2040</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recycling Net Upgrade</td>
<td>$379.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>RP 540 Upgrade Kit</td>
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<td>Ball Catch Net II</td>
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<td>Side Nets (for BCNII)</td>
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<td>Robo-Tote</td>
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ROBO-PONG FEATURES CHART

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<td>Instructional Book</td>
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*Recommended Capacity, Balls Recycle

Cost Effective • Upgradable • Add Features Quickly & Easily
Your first step to seeing how robot practice can revolutionize your game. This model is ideal for recreational players and the budget-minded. Lower speed and frequency ranges and static delivery accommodate untrained strokes. Set on top of table and twist base to desired trajectory. Improved bucket design ensures reliable ball feed. Add optional Ball Catch Net II for manual recycling of your returns. Optional Pong-Pal provides quick and easy retrieval of stray balls, even in hard-to-reach areas. Upgrade Robo-Pong 540 to Robo-Pong 1040 with the Robo-Pong 540 Upgrade Kit.

The next step up is this great robot for intermediate and tournament level players. Includes all features of Robo-Pong 540 plus oscillation and more powerful speed/frequency controls. Bucket Extender expands ball capacity for longer continuous play. Optional Ball Catch Net II captures your returns and enables manual recycling of the balls. Optional Pong-Pal provides quick and easy retrieval of stray balls, even in hard-to-reach areas. Optional Robo-Caddy provides multiple robot placement options or becomes a ball holder for serve practice. Upgrade Robo-Pong 1040 to Robo-Pong 2040 with the Recycling Net Upgrade Kit.

We're ready for the big step, this is the robot for serious players or those with disabilities. Used by top players like US Eric Owens. Can do everything Robo-Pong does and more. Recycling Net captures balls and automatically recycles the balls for action! Permits aerobic workouts. Folds for compact storage and easy transport. Plug in Pong-Master for a fun target game to hone accuracy and consistency or use it as a timer for drills. Optional Robo-Tote protects your robot and provides multiple storage and transport options.
World #180 Mo Zhang of Canada Pulls Off Upsets to Win The 2006 U.S. Open

BY DAVE FULLEN | PHOTOS BY NATT

On Wednesday in the Queen City of Charlotte, NC (a moniker shared with Cincinnati, Ohio), home of American Idol Clay Aiken, evangelist Billy Graham and NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon, the Women's Singles Qualifier starts. The top eight women — Wang Chen, Marina Shumakova, Whitney Ping, Poulami Ghatak, Lily Yip, Fabiola Ramos, Nan Li and Mo Zhang — have byes. The rest play in the qualifier to advance to the main draw.

Women Whittled to 16

Sixteen players advance from the first round of the main draw. Due to a possible eye injury, Canada's #2 player Judy Long withdrew from Women's singles. This allows Lily Yip to advance unchallenged. There are no upsets except for Atha Fong — 1962 (CA) over Nancy Patilin — 2033 (Quebec).

The Paulin-Fong match is an exciting, hard-fought match that draws a crowd. Nancy Paulin runs into the kind of hovets' nest that British General Cornwallis did during the Revolutionary War. After being driven out by citizens' fierce opposition to British occupation during the American Revolution, Cornwallis wrote that Charlotte was a “hornet's nest of rebellion.” In the same way, and on Charlotte turf, Atha Fong defends American soil in seven games. Paulin went up 2-0 with her quick blocking, backhand hitting style. Fong picks up games three and four with her spinnny loops, usually overcoming Paulin's backhand around the third hit. The two trade games five and six, with game six ending in Atha's favor, 15-13. In the end Paulin surrenders, 11-7. Match to Atha Fong (who will meet Wang Chen in the Round of 8 — talk about a hornets' nest!): -10, -8, 8, -9, 13, 7.

Other notable matches include Atha's sister Kyna Fong over Kasturi Chakroborty of India in five games: 9-8, 4, 8, 5; Bruna Viasic (CA) over Nancy Paulin's sister Cynthia (Quebec) in five: -5, -9, 10, 4, 8; and Maria Jose Solares (Guatemala) putting up a passionate effort but losing to Charlene Liu (MD) in five: -10, 4, 5, 10, 8.

Eighths

In a city with a major parkway named for Billy Graham, it's easy to find religion in Charlotte. For me, the spirit of women's singles is moving on the corner of College and East 3rd, as the 16 become the chosen eight, on their journey to become the Anointed One.

Wang Chen, Judy Hugh, Whitney Ping, Poulomi Ghatak, Lily Yip, Fabiola Ramos, Nan Li and Mo Zhang will meet in the evening to continue the quest.

Wang Chen (USA) vs. Atha Fong (USA)

Wang Chen has little trouble with Fong, winning 3,8,3,3. Wang, rated 2604, is the top seed in Women's Singles. She is world #57, but was once ranked #4. Atha Fong is an up-and-coming player from California, and is a member of the 2006 U.S. National Girls' Junior Team.
PADDLE PALACE: NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTOR FOR JUIC PRODUCTS

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COMBO SPECIALS

include these fantastic JUIC blades + 2 sheets of JUIC, JOOLA, NITTAKU, TIMAR, STIGA, YASAKA, or STAG rubber

[*Extra charge for some rubbers]

COMBO SPECIAL

$124.95
Item: XSJAC6
Air C-6 Carbon
Outstanding control and feel for a carbon/balsa blade! Balsa core and two layers of carbon. Carbon/balsa combination gives the extra control and feel to support the all-round game as well as your fast offensive potential. Great for touch play combined with strong loop and counter-drive. Handle: FL / Ply: 2W / Wt: 79 gm / Blade only $89.95 / Item SJAC6 CLASS OFF+ / SPEED 89 / CONTROL 68

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Item: XSJIF
Fiber Shot Blade
Blue-ish glass fibre adds great touch to this fast blade built for a great versatile offensive game. Nice balance in this middle-weight blade. Handle: FL / Wt: 84 gm / Pies 5W, 2G / Blade only $89.95 / Item SJIF CLASS OFF+ / SPEED 92 / CONTROL 68

COMBO SPECIAL

$124.95
Item: XSJAG8
Air G-8 Glass Fibre
For the offensive player who does it all! 3 Weave wood + 2 plies glass fibre. Faster than the G-8 and more control than the G-10. Great for loop, counter-drive, smash, block, close-to and farther-from-the-table play. Great balance, feel and touch. Handle: FL / Ply: 3W, 2G / Wt: 81 gm / Blade only $89.95 / Item SJAG8 CLASS OFF+ / SPEED 94 / CONTROL 61

COMBO SPECIAL

$104.95
Item: XSJAC
Air Carbon
Outstanding control and feel for a carbon/balsa blade! Balsa core and two layers of Japanese Akachi wood. Handle: FL / Wt: 83 gm / Pies 3W, 2G / Blade only $78.95 / Item SJAC CLASS OFF+/SPEED 100/CONTROL 55

ULTIMA SPECIAL

$26.95
Special!
Driva Smash Ultima
JUIC Ultima high tension sponge, combined with the fantastic Driva Smash topsheet. Results are WOW! Very powerful. Highly recommended for advanced offensive players. Sponge 2.0, 2.5. Reg. $31.95. Item RDU
SPEED 8.9 / SPIN 8.6 / CONTROL 7.6 / POWER 8.8

Driva Smash Ultima 5V
The ultimate for regluing! This new 5V Soft Version has the great “Super High Tension Ultima” characteristics but with even softer Ultima sponge. Sponge 2.0, 2.5. Reg. $31.95. Item RDUS
SPEED 8.4 / SPIN 8.3 / CONTROL 7.7 / POWER 8.5

JUIC 999 Elite Ultima
Fantastic! JUIC Ultima high tension sponge combined with the popular, spiny, fast JUIC 999 Elite topsheet for a 100% MADE IN JAPAN masterpiece! Outstanding speed, spin, and control for the 40mm ball. Sponge 1.8, 2.0, 2.5. Reg $31.95. Item RKEU
SPEED 9.0 / SPIN 9.5 / CONTROL 7.5 / POWER 9.6

JUIC 999 Elite Ultima 5V
The great JUIC Elite Ultima rubber is now available with softer 5V Ultima sponge! Perfect if you want softer sponge characteristics, with the JUIC 999 Elite topsheet for its outstanding tacky spin combined with speed. More regluing capability. Sponge 2.0, 2.5. Reg $31.95. Item RKEUS
SPEED 8.5 / SPIN 9.6 / CONTROL 7.5 / POWER 8.7

NEW LARGER 50ml SIZE
SAME PRICE!!!

Juic Aqua Stick
CAN BE SHIPPED BY AIR!
New concept! This is a water-based glue in a roll-up stick mode. After September 2007, all glues which contain harmful solvents will be banned. In order to meet the rule change, JUIC has developed this safe water-based glue for adhering rubber to the blade. The Aqua Stick is convenient, easy-to-transport, legal, and ecologically friendly glue. This is a regular glue (does not expand sponge or have a speed-glue effect). 50ml size. Item: AJAS

Juic Aqua Stick

$21.95

Offers expire 1-12-06
1-800-547-5891
paddlepalace.com
NITTAKU BALL GUIDE

Choose your ball:

**Nittaku 3-Star Premium**


The Nittaku 3-Star Premium 40mm ball is the highest grade of Nittaku 3-Star balls. Manufactured in Japan to higher specifications with higher quality material than any other ball. It stands in a class of its own. Nittaku 3-Star Premium balls are more consistent in hardness and they last longer than any other ball in the world.

Label on ball says "Premium 40, Made in Japan". Packaged in boxes of 3 balls each. Item BN4P

$6.25 for 3 balls / $11.95 for 6 balls / $22.95 for 12 balls.

**Nittaku 3-Star Premium Bulk Pack**

This is the same ball as the 3-Star Premium, but packaged as 10 dozen loose balls in bulk box. Available in white or orange. $189.95 for 10 dozen (price includes 5% discount for orders over $130)

**Nittaku 3-Star**

The Nittaku 3-Star 40mm ball is a high quality 3-star ball, exceeding the highest standards for ITTF approval. Made in China, as are virtually all 3-star balls of the major brands. Label on ball says "40" and "Japan". Packaged in boxes of 3 balls. Available in white or orange. Item BN4C

$4.75 for 3 balls / $8.50 for 6 balls / $15.95 for 12 balls

**Nodias: New rubber from Nittaku!**

Powerful Top-spin and Pin-Point Control:

In the top-sheet of Nodias, natural rubber is mixed slowly and carefully, resulting in a superior “bite” (or “grab”) feeling. Even in counter-attacking, the rubber grabs the ball firmly to keep it under control. The ideal combination between the top-sheet and the high elastic sponge gives you:


**Nittaku Top Ball**

Best practice ball in the world! This 40mm ball is made in Japan. Made with the same quality material and process and in the same Nittaku factory as the Premium ball. These balls did not pass all the very strict tests to become designated as Premium.

Packaged as loose balls in a bulk-pack of two dozen (24) or ten dozen (120) balls. White or Orange. Item BN4T

$15.95 for 2 dozen / $69.95 for 10 dozen

**Young Star**

Excellent 40mm practice ball from Nittaku, at a great price. Packaged in boxes of 3 balls. White or orange. Item BN4Y

$5.95 for 12 balls / $49.95 for 12 dozen (144)

**Nittaku 44mm Large Ball**

These are the finest quality 3-Star ball with the oversized 44mm diameter, extra-large for the 44mm game. Slower speed, less spin – easier to see, hit, and control. Excellent quality, made in Japan by Nittaku with the same highest quality materials as the Premium balls. Orange only. Packaged in boxes of 2 balls. Item BN44P

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**COMBO SPECIALS INCLUDE BLADE + 2 SHEETS RUBBER from JOOLA, JUC, NITTAKU, STIGA, TIBHAR, YASAKA, or STAG**

[Note: extra charge for some rubbers]

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Includes blade + 2 sheets rubber from TIBHAR, JOOLA, NITTAKU, JUC, STIGA, YASAKA, or STAG. Save up to $50! [*Extra charge for some rubbers]

Oﬀers expire 11/21/06

COMBO SPECIAL $89.95

Item: XSTRE

Revolt

Normally trying to produce an oﬀensive blade that balances equally the mix of speed and control is very diﬃcult. However through a lot of experimentation TIBHAR has managed to do so with the new blade Revolt. Now explosive power is possible while still maintaining wonderful ball feeling. Handle: FL, AN, ST. Wgt: 86 gm. Plies: 7v. Blade only $44.95. Item: XSTRE. Class: OFF

COMBO SPECIAL $174.95

Item: XSTNH19

H-1-9

Announcing the rebirth of our legendary, super-fast H-1-9 blade! This famous one-ply Hinoki wood blade has been completed revised in shape and weight to be a thoroughly modern blade that is very fast and hard for offensive play. Handle: FL, AN, ST. Wgt: 86 gm. Piles: 1W. Blade only $129.95. Item: STNH19. Class: OFF+

TIBHAR: Official Equipment Sponsor for the 2007 World Championships

Nimbus

This new Tibhar rubber is ahead of its time. Speed glue is no longer necessary because the new NIMBUS -SPI includes TIBHAR's newly developed speedglue integrated configuration giving you all the essential factors of rubber that has been speedglued. You get incredible Spin Speed-Dynamics plus typical sound and ball contact feeling of a freshly speed glued rubber sheet, in readiness for the glue ban in 2007.

Dynamic plus typical sound and ball contact feeling of a freshly speed glued rubber sheet, in readiness for the glue ban in 2007.

Fresh Bag

Very light sports bag made from resistant polyester. Big main compartment with zipper, permitting wide opening. Front pocket with zipper and two lateral spacious pockets. Stable plastic bottom. Adjustable, removable and reinforced strap. Two separate handles with loop for an optimal carrying. Made of polyester 600D super. Available in color red/black or blue/black. Measurements are 64 x 34 x 31cm. Item: ATFR. Price: $34.95

Fresh Double Rectangular Case

Fresh Single Rectangular Case

These quality rectangular cases have integrated protection foam and cushioned cover walls guaranteeing optimal bat protection. Peripheral zipper permitting total opening. Additional front pocket with zipper. Single case holds one paddle. Double case can hold two paddles. Single case available in red/black or blue/black. Double case available in blue/black. Item: Double Case CT5F / Single CT4F

Aluminum Rectangular Case

Very robust case made from aluminum for the best protection for your bat. Corners are protected with plastic corners. Thick foam inlay for one bat and 3 balls. Color is silver. Measures: 29.5 x 22 x 5cm. Item: CT4AL

Rapid DTecS Soft

RAPID DTecS SOFT is a brand new rubber. This new SOFT version is even more advanced than the normal DTecS rubber. The sound is fantastic, even without speed glue. This rubber is now so fast, that you will not need to glue anymore even though you can still speed glue this season.

Speedy Spin Tuned

Speedy Spin is now available in a faster version 'TUNED'. A new developed technology tunes this rubber, making it much more powerful and faster. The effect is kept within the rubber thanks to the airtight packaging.

We will match our competitors' prices!
STEVEN FETH CROSS

The perfect offensive blade!

Awesome namesake blade of Stefan Feth is now available for us regular human players! For Limba/Samba vaniers, with a special type of glue used in aero plane construction, give a higher glueing of the veneer layers. Result is increase in speed but with amazing control and intense ball feeling. Now we know Stefan's secret to success! Handle: FL, ST/Wg: 85 gm/Plies SW/Blade only $43.95/Item: SORR CLASS OFF+/SPEED 98/CONTROL 73 AVAILABLE IN CHINESE PENHOLD STYLE

Joola®

R1

Extremely thick Balsa core and a semi-large handle increases duration of ball contact. Despite extremely fast speed, you get controlled playing feeling. Perfect for attacking players, especially with safe toppings. Also good for long pips players. Handle: FL, ST/Wg: 85gm/Plies SW/Blade only $69.95/Item: SORI. CLASS OFF+/SPEED 98/CONTROL 73 AVAILABLE IN CHINESE PENHOLD STYLE

2 NEW RUBBER SHEETS

Energy - SMOOTH
GREEN POWER technology! The first rubber with incorporated fresh gluing effect. Almost 100% possible increase in performance achieved by fresh gluing. You get trajectory, playing feel and the all-important sound of fresh gluing. Sponge 1.8, 2.0, MAX. Reg $38.95. Item: ROEEN. SPEED 9.4/SPIN 9.3/CONTROL 7.5/POWER 9.5

Razer - LONG PIPS

Never before have long pips been so successful! Developed with probably the best European long pips block player, Amelie Solja. New fabric structure of the rubber ensures durability and control. Strong "rip" effect gives even experienced topspin players big problems. Red and black. Sponge: GX, Reg $44.95. Item: RORA. SPEED 4.6/SPIN 7.0/CONTROL 4.7/POWER 5.8

Suitable FOR

N connectivity & quality material

Reg $48.95. Item: RORA. SPEED 5.0/SPIN 7.5/CONTROL 7.5/POWER 9.5

NEW LARGER

50ml SIZE SAME PRICE!!!

Juic Aqua Stick

CAN BE SHIPPED BY AIR!

New concept! Water-based glue in a roll-up stick. After Sept. 2007, all glues containing harmful solvents will be banned. To meet the rule change, JUIC developed this safe water-based glue for adhering rubber to the blade. The Aqua Stick is convenient, easy-to-transport, legal, and ecologically friendly. This is a regular glue (does not expand sponges or have a speed-glue effect) 50ml size. Item: A1AS

Juic Aqua Stick Roll-Up

Energy - SMOOTH
GREEN POWER technology! The first rubber with incorporated fresh gluing effect. Almost 100% possible increase in performance achieved by fresh gluing. You get trajectory, playing feel and the all-important sound of fresh gluing. Sponge 1.8, 2.0, MAX. Reg $38.95. Item: ROEEN. SPEED 9.4/SPIN 9.3/CONTROL 7.5/POWER 9.5

Nittaku

Nodias: The New rubber from Nittaku!

Powerful Top-spin and Pin-point Control! Top-sheets mixes natural rubber economically, carefully, resulting in the superior "bite" (or "grab") feeling of Nodias. Even in counter-attacking, the rubber grabs the ball firmly to keep it under control. You get powerful top-spin, controlled slow shots, and pin-point control in a variety of shots. Sponge: 2.0, 2.2. Price: $34.95. Item: RNOO. SPEED 9.2/SPIN 9.3/CONTROL 7.4/POWER 9.3

El-Star Premium Balls

The highest grade Nittaku! 3-star balls, made in Japan to higher specifications & quality material than any other ball! Item: BN4P $6.25 for 3 balls/$11.95 for 6 balls/$22.95 for 12 balls / Premium Bulk Pack $189 (Bulk Pack comes at 10 doz. loose balls in bulk bar. Includes 5% quantity discount for orders over $130)

ULTIMA RUBBERS SPECIALS

3 Star Premium Balls

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NEW FROM TIBHAR

COMBO SPECIAL $89.95
Item: XSTRE

Revolt
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Dr. Neubauer

2005 European Champion Vladimir Samsonov uses Tibhar blades and rubber.

EVERYTHING FOR THE TABLE TENNIS PLAYER!
Judy Hugh (USA) vs. Marina Shmakova (KAZ)

Judy Hugh’s unflappable attitude and consistently effective looping game makes her tough to beat. She drops one game to Shmakova, the #1 player in Kazakhstan, world #450 (Shmakova has moved up more than 100 places in the last four months). Match to Hugh: 6,8,7,-7,6.

Whitney Ping (USA) vs. Barbara Wei (USA)

Whitney Ping, world #407 and North American #12, likes mid-distance playing. She was a member of the 2004 U.S. Olympic Team and currently plays for Stanford University. Barbara Wei was U.S. #2 Under 16 Girls, #3 Under 18 Girls and a member of the USA Cadet Team, 2002-2004. Ping wins the match, 11,6,4,4.

Brana Vlasic (USA) vs. Poulomi Ghatak (IND)

Poulomi Ghatak is World #207 with a rating of 2134. Brana Vlasic is the USATT July/Aug 2006 #1 in Under 16 Girls, 2006 San Diego Open Juniors and U-22 Women’s Runner-up. Vlasic gives Ghatak a tough match with strong loops on both wings, but Ghatak responds in kind, winning 6,-7,2,7,-9,4.

Lily Yip (USA) vs. Bella Livshin (USA)

Lily Yip has been a member of the U.S. National Team for most of the past fifteen years and is a two-time Olympian. Bella Livshin from California is no match for Lily’s fast-blocking/quick-hitting style, losing 7,4,5,3.

Qi Tang (CAN) vs. Fabiola Ramos (VEN)

Qi Tang has been a surprise in this Open. Rated 1932 from Canada, she’s played consistently well. She continues that play against Fabiola Ramos, taking Ramos to seven games with big forehand loops.

Fabiola Ramos is the #1 woman from Venezuela. One web page states: “...against Fabiola Ramos you are always under pressure; the Venezuelan makes few mistakes, the control she exerts is superb, she is experienced; she knows when to spin the ball and when to play fast.”

Ramos and Tang split the first four games. Then Tang goes ahead to take game five. Ramos takes the next two, winning game seven 11-3.

Nan Li (USA) vs. Charlene Liu (USA)

Nan Li has little trouble with Charlene Liu, a 2097 player from Maryland. Liu is no shrinking violet, but Nan Li is rated 2433 and has a wealth of championship experience as a junior, and a Chinese world champion lineage from both parents. Match to Li, 3,2,8,5.

Kyna Fong (USA) vs. Mo Zhang (CAN)

Kyna Fong is rated 2147 from California. She puts up a good fight, but can’t match Mo Zhang’s quick and powerful loops. Zhang is the 2006 TMS Canada Cup #1 – Women’s Singles Champion, and is rated 2419 at age 17. Match to Zhang, 6,3,6,2.

Quarterfinals - Women Whittled to Final Four

Wang Chen (USA) vs. Judy Hugh (USA)

Top-seeded Wang Chen overcame Judy Hugh with fast, powerful topspin. But Hugh was not intimidated, returning power with power. She has some nice put-away shots, staging a comeback in game one from a 6-1 deficit to make it 7-6. Wang. But Wang Chen is just too good. She’s capable of ripping forehands and backhands, and she just doesn’t miss. Match to Wang Chen, 6,6,4,6.

Whitney Ping (USA) vs. Poulomi Ghatak (IND)

This was THE match of the Round of Eight. In an excellent match-up, Ping and Ghatak take turns winning, with Ping striking first. It appears that Whitney’s strategy is to take Ghatak out of her game, building a 9-5 lead. But Ghatak comes back with two kill shots, narrowing the score before Ping wins 11-8.

Ghatak dominates game two, 11-6. When Ping stages a comeback in game three, Ghatak applies heavy sidespin to her serves and holds Whitney off, 11-9.

In game four Ping gets the momentum, going up 6-2. But Ghatak’s loop and kills from both wings and the heavy sidespin on her serves helps close the gap. Still, Ping prevails, 11-9.

In game five, Ghatak adds a high toss to her serving arsenal, then a couple of easy serves to throw off Whitney’s timing. But it’s close, with the game going to Ghatak, 12-10.

At this point Ghatak is up 3-2. She puts away Ping’s opening serve down the line and, Ping takes the next two with her own put-away shots. At 7-9 Ghatak, Ping takes a timeout with Coach Stefan Feth. When play resumes Ghatak rips a forehand loop, but Ping blocks it and gets the next point to tie the game at 9. In an incredible rally that ends with a Ghatak kill, Poulomi pulls ahead to 10-9. This game continues back and forth, with Ghatak getting four match points. But Ping won’t die, blocking two loops to tie it at 14, and then winning the next two points.

In game seven it appears that the momentum is with Whitney. So much so that at 6-2 Ping, Ghatak changes her strategy and starts
playing a mid-distance defensive game. When Ping blocks a ripping Ghatak backhand loop down the line, the game and match go to Whitney, 8-6, 9-9, 10-14, 5.

**Fabiola Ramos (VEN) vs. Lily Yip (USA)**

This was a game of quick blocking and hitting by both players. Yip's lightning low hits had Ramos on the run, but somehow Ramos keeps squeaking out wins. The first two games go to deuce. The biggest gap is three points in game four when Ramos wins on an edge. The difference in this match may have been Ramos' topspin - when she loops, Lily's blocks sometimes end up in the net. Match to Ramos, 10, 10, 9, 8.

**Mo Zhang (CAN) vs. Nan Li (USA)**

Mo Zhang, Canada's #1 player, proved to be too quick and too accurate for Nan Li, who was a top U.S. junior and has recently resumed training. Li causes some Zhang mistakes in game two, and takes game three to deuce. In game four Li takes the lead on some quick backhand blocks, but Zhang starts working Li's backhand to her advantage. Match to Zhang, 3, 7, 10, 6.

**Semifinals**

**Wang Chen (USA) vs. Whitney Ping (USA)**

Top-seeded Wang Chen had little trouble defeating Whitney Ping 4-0, although Ping never gave up trying to find an opening. In the first two games Ping has trouble finding a chink in the armor of bullet-proof Wang. Game three is a different matter, with Ping rallying to tie it at 4-4, falling behind again, then making a big smash to pull to 6-8. Wang rips a forehand, and the two rally as Wang runs out the game, 11-6. The last game is mostly Wang again at 11-4. Match to Wang Chen, 1, 1, 6, 4.

**Fabiola Ramos (VEN) vs. Mo Zhang (CAN)**

Venezuela's #1 player and World #262 Fabiola Ramos took World #180 and Canada's #1 player Mo Zhang to the wire in a closely-fought match. In game one it was Zhang winning 11-2 as Ramos can't get a handle on Zhang's topspin (or lack of topspin). In game two she finds her rhythm and her own spin to even the match at one game apiece, each having two match points before Ramos seals it, 15-13.

In game three both players counter cautiously, with Zhang making the fewest mistakes to win 11-5. In game four Ramos still can't find her rhythm. Zhang's backhand appears to be flatter than Ramos is comfortable with and she can't get a read on it. Zhang wins again to go up 3-1 in games.

But in game five a new Fabiola shows up, moving Zhang around and finding a weakness in Zhang's deep backhand corner.

...and resumes play by lighting up the next backhand - Wang's tour de force - and coming out on top.

In game two, Wang puts away Zhang's serve return and pulls ahead 3-0. It looks like Wang is trying to slow things down a little, make the pace more deliberate. The two stay within a couple of points of each other - Zhang going up 8-6, then Wang scores the next five points to win 11-8.

In game three Zhang goes up 5-1 and someone in the crowd seems loudly pleased by that. Wang protests to the umpire - rightfully so - and resumes play by lighting up the next backhand rally. Wang's backhand is tough to beat in a rally, and she uses this to good effect. But Zhang finds a way to pull ahead 9-4, then closes the deal, 11-7.

Game four continues much the same way, only this time Wang pops up two of Zhang's serves just enough to give Zhang an opening, and she puts them away. At 8-6 Zhang calls a timeout, sensing a swing in momentum toward Wang. When she comes out Zhang wins a backhand rally with Wang. At 10-7 Zhang pops up a serve and Wang puts it away. At 10-8 there's an exciting rally with Wang looping big and Zhang bringing them back until Wang loops off the table. Now it's 3-1 Zhang.

In game five, Zhang pulls ahead to 5-2. Wang calls a timeout, then comes back to tie it up 5-5. At 7-7, in the point of the match, Wang iscountering forehand with Zhang and taking her from corner to corner. Just when it looks like Zhang can't reach a bull to her backhand, she stretches left and sends it low over the net short to Wang's forehand. It has too much downward drag on it for Wang to clear the net, leaving Wang frustrated and the audience gasping. At 8-7 (Wang) Zhang sneaks a backhand past Wang in her own backhand corner to tie it up, then gets a put-way to make it 9-8 (Zhang). When Wang's final return hits the net and drops wide, it's all over.

Match and championship to the 2006 U.S. Open Women's Singles Champion, Mo Zhang, 8, 8, 7, 8, 8.
Shoot-out in Charlotte: Aleksandar Karakasevic/Sasa Drinic vs. Stefan Feth/Thomas Keinath

BY RICHARD MCAFEE | PHOTOS BY NATT

Both of these teams are very experienced doubles teams and the resulting match was of excellent quality. In the beginning of the first game the lefty/righty pair of Drinic and Karakasevic seemed to move better together and took the early lead. In what was to be a recurring pattern during this match, the German Pair would fight hard to close to 10-all, only to lose a heartbreaker, 15-13 in the first game.

In game two Feth and Keinath started out much better and nursed an early lead all the way to game point at 10-9. At this point a clever drop shot from Karakasevic ties it at 10-all. The teams share great shots to 12-all, but then Feth misses a high backhand and Keinath also misses a backhand loop, and Drinic and Karakasevic win 15-13.

In game three, the German Team finally breaks through. With Feth making good placements and Keinath power looping winners they win 11-9. Throughout the match Feth and Keinath seem to have a plan of containing Karakasevic and trying to score on Drinic. It works for a while but Drinic is an excellent doubles player and you just can’t keep Karakasevic from making unbelievable shots for long. Game four to Karakasevic/Drinic at 13-11.

Game five was the most exciting of the match, with Karakasevic/Drinic coming out strong and taking a 4-1 lead. During this early stage, Karakasevic made a series of amazing shots, even scoring with a backhand loop from long range while falling down. Led by some excellent serving from Feth and strong backhand loops off the bounce by Keinath, the Germans again tie it at 9-all. A strong backhand loop by Keinath gives the German Team a game point at 10-9, only to have Drinic score with a lucky net, 10-all. Here both teams made some great shots, a clever side-top serve return by Feth, a great power-loop by Karakasevic, a strong counter-looping rally won by the Germans. When Drinic finally nets a loop the Germans win the game 13-11, and have cut the lead to 3-2 for Karakasevic and Drinic.

Game six would be the final game as Karakasevic simply took over play. His backhand rip-loops and forehand flip kills of serves gave the audience an exhibition of true World-Class Doubles Play. Game and match to Karakasevic/Drinic, 13, 13, 9, 11, 11, 4.

Few months ago I wrote about the first family of American table tennis. In the Women’s Doubles Final the female half of the Yip/Dattel/Hugh family prevailed over India in five games to win at this year’s U.S. Open. The Indian team of Poulomi Ghatak and Kasturi Chakroborty were no match for mom Lily Yip and daughter Judy Hugh. Early in game one Lily quickly-blocks to set up Judy’s loop. Ghatak of India has one good kill, but Yip/Hugh led all the way to win game one, 11-8.

In game two Lily started looping. At 6-5 (Yip/Hugh) Lily told Judy, “Let’s control them,” then proceeds to give up the next point. Ghatak rips a forehand to help India pull away at 8-7. Hugh loops and Ghatak misses the counter-loop to fall behind 8-9, but ties it up at 9 and pulls away 10-9 when Lily nets a serve. India finally wins when Judy Hugh misses a loop. Game two to India, 13-11.

In game three, down 7-5, Yip/Hugh go on a tear. Lily has four winners in a row, helping to put the game away, 11-7.

Game four begins with Ghatak ripping a forehand. Lily and Judy combine for a double winner – Lily pounces first, then it’s Judy’s turn to put away a weak return to lead 7-3. Hugh loops a backhand down the line to make it 9-4. A Yip winner makes it 10-4. Ghatak tries to mount a comeback to pull to 5, but it’s Yip/Hugh, 11-6.

Control them, they did. Match and title to Lily Yip and Judy Hugh, 8-11, 7, 6.


US Open Hardbat Events

BY TIM BOGGAN

Of the 60 events offered here in Charlotte, half a dozen were exclusively Hardbat. In the 15-entry Open, Defending and several-time Champion Lily Yip, given a semi’s assist by husband Barry Dattel, was the $100 straight-game winner. But much of the action centered around California’s Trevor Runyan of the U.S. Junior Team. Since Trevor plays hardbat only at the U.S. Open and Closed and was competing with sponge in other events, he at first was going to default against Lim Ming Chui (at least Ming thought so, and promptly downed a sandwich). Then he changed his mind. But was the chance for prize money worth it? Down 17-9 in the 1st, it didn’t seem so. However, he staged a great rally and went on to defeat Chui in straight games. And to think that Ming’s new wife didn’t accompany him—that way he’d get more sleep, he said, be in shape for his many matches. Well, you can’t win them all.

This advance brought Trevor to the semi’s and Ty Hoff who’d rung out the old, rung in the new millennium as 2-time past Champion. Recently, Ty had played even less hardbat than Trevor—he was last on court at the 2004 Chicago Killerspin Open where he’d lost in the final to Lily. Although he was playing with “Reisman rubber” for the first time, his match with Runyan, who so reminds me in appearance of California U.S. Team member of 30 years ago Dean Galardi, was a great crowd-pleaser.

Down 2-1 in games against Trevor, Ty, taking over the offense in the 4th and forcing his self-chastising opponent into (“Crazy!”) errors, he wins 9 of the next 10 points, moves from 14-11 down to (“YEAHHH!”) 20-15 up and sends the match into the 5th. There, with Runyan complaining he’s “floating” the ball, Hoff’s ahead 5-4—only to mis-serve and (this time the streak’s) fall behind 9-5. Down 16-10, Ty fights back to 16-14 (“Yesss! It’s not over!”). Not over?...But in a moment Trevor has him 20-14 match point...20-15, 20-16. Time! says Trevor...20-18 (“C’mon, two more!”). And then the point by attempting a huge loop instead of just dropping the ball on the table. At 13-13 de Souza again had him on the ropes, but missed the smash off lob as well as his last chance to score. Runyan wins, 8-7, 6-13.

Jacobson, decked out in red, white, and blue patriotic shirt with bandana-cap to match; then in the final, constantly moving the ball around, he defeated Sarasota, Florida’s 54-year-old Victor Lorand. In earlier matches of note, N.C.’s Make Babuin had a 3-game win over N.J.’s Harlan Jamison; and Tim Boggan had an exhausting 20-19, 19 win over Dean Norman.

Under 2000

Oddly, only one team was entered in the canceled Hardbat Doubles, and when 2005 Hardbat Under 2000 Champion Bruce Liu didn’t come to Charlotte, these two teammates ended up on opposite sides of the table. In the Under 2000 final, Victor Lorand, who attended the University of Cincinnati in 1970, the year before “Ping-Pong Diplomat” John Tannehill enrolled there, and who then over the years moved on to Indiana and Florida, beat Simon Jacobson two straight. Simon, however, was very upbeat, for he was relocating from Miami to St. Augustine to be with his fiancée, Jennifer, who by teaching him Yoga was helping him in his other avocation, 5K running (23 races this first half year).

Under 1500

The Hardbat Under 1500 event was won, as could be seen from the unexpectedly large trophy he was carrying, by Dean Norman. Dean, who can be found at Vince Turner’s Club in Cleveland a couple of nights a week, and who here at the Convention Center, playing or practicing, never seemed to leave the tables, beat runner-up Ralph Prescott of New York, the 2nd seed in the event. Norman had been fooling around with an old Parker Brothers but that came with a 1939 set of rules he’d bought on E-Bay. When he took the old rubber off to replace it with Leland, it disintegrated into a fine red powder. Some fun for one of our Sport’s History buffs, eh?

Gusikoff Cup

Sponsors of the Gusikoff Cup—to help former U.S. Champion Bobby Gusikoff with his medical expenses—were BumperNets, Butterfly, Newgy’s, Paddle Palace, Reed’s Ginger Brew, Sabi Pictures, and Table Tennis Pioneers. The final between attackers Lily Yip and Lim Ming Chui went to Lily, 17-8, 16. At one point in the 1st game, Lily lamented that “I just can’t play.” But then she found her forehand. At 10-all in the 3rd, spurred on by a net ball and Ming’s mis-serve, she took a 16-11 lead. And though Ming rallied he couldn’t recover. For their efforts, Lily received the $100 1st prize put up by Reed’s Ginger Brew; Ming the $50 donated by Sabi filmmaker Kevin Shah.

Ed Ball, the Reed rep, tells us that both players donated their winnings to Gusikoff who’s convalescing at the Arbor View Care facility in Santa Monica (310-255-2800). Stop by or call Bobby—maybe he’ll give you a Hardbat tip or two?

US Open Under 2600

and Under 2400 Events

BY JOHN PAUL

The Under 2600 event came down to American Eric Owens and Jose Ramirez-Marin from Guatemala. On paper Owens would seem to have an advantage with a 2577 rating and a career high of 2712 against Ramirez-Marin’s 2485.

Owens won the first game 12-10. Both played tight, not taking big risks, it could have gone either way. Game two saw Ramirez-Marin take a 6-0 lead after Owens pushed two serves into the net and missed one of his patented backhand punch blocks. To his credit he fought back to 8-9, but lost the next two points. Game three was the most entertaining game, with many forehand off the table battles mostly won by Ramirez-Marin, even getting in one of his own backhand blocks down the line. With an 11-8 win, Ramirez-Marin was winning with youth & hunger as much as talent. Game four saw a frustrated Owens call time at 0-4 after whiffing a ball with his forehand, just to resume the one-sided contest to 9-9. Jose Ramirez-Marin wins, 10-8,8,2. Definitely a name to watch for.

The Under 2400 final saw Didi de Souza from Georgia take on Trevor Runyan from California. Runyan, a featured junior in last month’s magazine, has been on a roll lately with wins over Adam Hugh & Misha Kazantsev.

Games one and two were good contests with the more experienced De Souza winning points with a variety of serves, but losing the forehand battles to the younger player, 11-8 and 11-7 to Runyan. De Souza’s serves were key in game three again as well as starting rallies with his spiny backhand, causing Runyan to loop off the table often. 11-6 De Souza. Game four was even right up to deuce with much of the same. At 12-12, De Souza had Runyan scrambling in desperation mode only to lose the point by attempting a huge loop instead of just dropping the ball on the table. At 13-13 De Souza again had him on the ropes, but missed the smash off vob as well as his last chance to score. Runyan wins, 8-7, 6-13.
Senior Events... and Umpiring

By Tim Boggan | Photo by Mal Anderson

As I keep telling everyone until they’re beginning to believe me, I’m mellow, mellow, mellow. However, I agree this wasn’t always the case. I’m also sure I wasn’t the only one who had a sense of déjà vu at this year’s U.S. Open. Thirty years ago, some of our leading players not only boycotted the U.S. Open, but picketed it as well. Why? Because they were incensed at the high entry fees and low prize money at the tournament. If a male won the Triple Crown back then—Men’s Singles, Men’s Doubles, and Mixed Doubles—he’d have collected a grand total of $250. A number of us thought that outrageous, and detrimental to the progress of the Sport.

This year at the U.S. Open, there was no boycott, no picketing, but there were plenty of star players absent, along with a great many player/spectators who opted not to attend. In 2006, History demanded no placard-bearing signs of rude protest—the players’ silent objections were eloquent enough.

At that 1976 U.S. Open, there was a crowd-pleasing deuce-in-the-5th Men’s semi’s played between Yugoslavia’s eventual tournament winner Dragutin Surbek (World #3) and Des Douglas (England #1). At the very beginning of this match, the players were faulted by the strict umpire once too often. The Yugoslav Captain/Coach, Dusan “Dule” Osmanagic, supported by the English, insisted on having this umpire replaced. Why? Because, Osmanagic said, they weren’t being allowed to “play table tennis.” The umpire “wanted to be the most important person on the court, and Surbek and Douglas couldn’t have that.” Thirty years later at the U.S. Open, when an umpire could be heard bragging he’d do far called 40 faults, our players can’t continue to have that either. Unless one of the two performers on court objects that he’s being taken advantage of, “Let them play table tennis” ought to be the unobtrusive umpire’s mantra.

Of course, this “Let them play” point of view is what I’ve seen at the Men’s final at the last two majors I attended—the 2005 U.S. Open and the 2006 U.S. Open. The umpires wisely allowed play to be continuous, though, were they obsessively strict, they could have called faults. However, time and again in other events, quite unnecessary and often disrupting faults were called, sometimes after warnings, sometimes without warnings, for obviously umpires are human (though sometimes delighted in denying their humanity), and so are constantly making independent, subjective judgments.

What is a “must” call for one (especially if he/she feels he’s being officially “observed”) might be ignored by another. I myself got the feeling that a number of umpires, who I’d think anyone would favor on seeing them enjoying themselves in uniformed, off-court social solidarity, again and again on court really didn’t know what judgments to make. But that’s understandable since the thrust of the umpiring is toward a bookish abstraction needing interpretation (its misplaced mantra, the phrase “must be enforced”) rather than on the way the two players are uncomplainingly, actually engaging on court. Thus, repeated, intrusive calls sometimes result in psychic havoc to a player by an umpire who can no longer be considered neutral. The Game is for the players, not the attention-seeking umpires. And since the players don’t want unwarranted interruptions, why should umpires mean-spiritedly persist in them?

Enough said? Well, maybe not. But I go on.

Over 40 Men

In the absence of last year’s winner, Li Yuxiang, and runner-up, Shao Yu—indeed, in the absence of all this century’s Over 30 winners in both the U.S. Open and Closed, the #1 seed in the Men’s Over 30, 2001 U.S. Men’s Closed Champion Eric Owens, got off to a rocky start. He opened with a 9, 9, -10, 10 win over Hank McCoulum who, though at a 500-rating point disadvantage, was fit and tenacious, and, as he said, “took risks” while Eric played “conservatively.” Owens would not lose another game though, after wins over John Allen and 2005 U.S. Closed Over 30 Singles and Doubles Champ Jiri Hlava (who’d ousted steady looper Pedro Perez 12-10 in the 4th), Eric defaulted his semi’s match to Herbert Neubauer. Herbert, a somewhat legendary figure as many-time World and European Veterans Champion in the 40/50/60 events, lives in a little corner of France, just outside Geneva where he plays in a league. This was his first U.S. Open.

Herbert’s suave control (“he has such good hands”) with both the Dr. Neubauer short Pistol pips (1.5 sponge) on his fast, sweeping forehand and the (no sponge) long pips red Inferno on his blocking/attacking backhand often caused consternation among even his very experienced opponents. “I love to play pip players,” Barry Dattel said to Herbert after losing to him three straight; then added, “But you’re a little different.” Others thought so too—at the Yokohama World Veterans Championship, quite a few Japanese were said to have been lining up to mimic Neubauer’s strokes.

On the other side of the 30’s Draw, Guatemala’s 2006 World Team member Omar Flores advanced to the semi’s with a quarter’s win over player/coach Mark North who’d rallied to take out Georgia’s 2182-rated Mike Levene, after Mike had been down 2-0 to Jose Sanchez. Meanwhile, Guillermo Rosales, who I’d heard was once a Mexican National team member, survived Newgy’s Roger Dickson in 5, then went down to down California’s Kazuhiro Kamada in 4, and, when Kwao Hi De Souza defaulted after knocking out Lim Ming Chui, Guillermo was $75 richer. But in the 1st game of his semi’s as he’s 8-9 gamely contesting with the 250-point favorite Flores, the umpire faults him, after which he whistles to end the game, then, on being faulted again, loses the 2nd 11-2, and is hopelessly down 9-2 in the 3rd.

In the final, the 36-year-old Flores is wearing the number 52 (there are no player numbers in the Program under 100, so perhaps it’s one left over from the Colorado Springs tournament he won last weekend?). But it’s not hard to differentiate the much older European contender, whose backhand, as one fellow put it, “souds as if he’s playing with a clunker bat,” from the energetic Central American priming for this summer’s Caribbean Championships in Columbia. With the match tied 1-1 in games, Neubauer, underrated at 2172, gets off to a 5-1 lead in the 3rd, only to see the energetic Flores, unfazed by what many considered a racket made in Hell they couldn’t play against, pummeling in forehands to quickly tie it up. Down 8-7, Herbert mis-serves and can’t recover. In the 4th, Neubauer, again down 5-1, calls Time, then returns to miss a hangar, and, with a little ironic smile appearing repeatedly on his face as Omar’s confidence flowers, he has to settle for 2nd.

Over 40 Men

Neither the 2005 Over 40 Champion Cheng Yinghua or runner-up Tuan Le were back—but the omnipresent Neubauer, positioned up close to the table, extended his reach (giving up on the average only 5 points a game), to make his unimpeded way to the final. Matches in this half of the Draw of more than routine interest were: Billy Marshall over NC’s Tom Miller (12-10 in the 5th); Mike Harris over Scott Desidero in 5; Larry Bavly over Ricardo Lee in 5 (Larry, on a health kick, had been pleased to hear his trainer say how agile he was for, er, his size), but (oh, the buffet again beckons?), for (stay strong, Lan...
As his name suggests, Ramakrishnan is of Indian heritage, but, with a 2138 U.S. rating, he's not a member of the visiting Indian Team. He went on, before losing to Neubauer, to down “The Chief,” George Brathwaite, 12-10 in the 4th, after George earlier had changed his strategy and let the 2282-rated Changping Duan open with his forehand rather than thrust sharp push-returns at him from his penhold backhand.

In the other half of the Draw, 2004 Over 40 finalist Dattel advanced to the semi’s without dropping a game, beating among others the late Grady Gordon’s son, Greg, while Rosales was edging Steve Hochman 13-11 in the 4th. Meeting Barry in the semi’s was husky Christopher Teille, who formerly played for a Hanover, Germany club (he’s also a soccer and chess enthusiast), but since 2004 has settled in Pennsylvania where he sometimes plays at Nanticoke or Allentown. In the eighth’s, he ousted Jim McQueen, seen wearing his red/white and blue outfit, capped by a matching something mini-tent-like that made him the USATT’s Uncle Sam answer to Laurence of Arabia. And in the quarter’s, against Levene, he was down 2-1 after losing the 3rd 12-10, then rallied for the win.

Against Dattel, Christopher—the name’s appropriate, for in real life he’s a Lutheran minister—was again 1-1 in games when Barry, ahead 8-6, was faulted for not throwing the ball “nearly vertically upward.” When Dattel became incensed over this call, Teille said, “Let us replay the point.” But the umpire refused the request. To hear Barry for the remaining points of the game, you might think he’d lost control, but to see him play you knew better. As the score mounted to 9-all, 10-9, after every won point he’d shout at the top of his lungs, then finally on winning 10-9 finished off his frustration, or at least some of it, by yelling, “Damn umpire!” All of which the damn umpire totally ignored.

Turns out Teille played at the 2006 Bremen World Veterans and survived for a while, so he’s tough. Against Dattel, time and again he looked out of the point, was slow getting to his forehand, but made great gets and counters, and when Barry, down 8-10 in the 4th, failed to return serve, they moved into the 5th. There, Barry, down 2-6, fought back to go up 8-7, but then lost his momentum and went down 11-9. In losing, Dattel was complimentary, acknowledged that the 2260-rated Teille had gotten the most out of his game.

The Saturday afternoon final against Neubauer was rather anticlimactic. Teille, who played with impartial pips (normally used on the backhand) andSrver, said, “I am very good against long pips”—and he certainly proved it by beating Herbert three straight. He then had to leave the yellow card from the blind/deaf umpire for “arguing.” assistant umpire, “Can I take my number off too?” This brought Dick a

But the darkness merely hovered. there was no outpouring. The match changed,” he mumbled on picking up a ball near me. “I’m defaulting.”

Over 30/40 Women

It was a foregone conclusion, was it, that Lily Yip would win the Women’s events for which she was eligible? In the Women’s 30’s she won only one match—against Hye-Sook (Brenda) Mun—but that was all she needed to collect the $200 1st prize. In the 40’s, however—surprise!—she was upset in 4 by Charlene Xiaoying Liu. “Lily, attacking…missed everything.” Charlene said. “I just blocked.” It was the first time Charlene was upset in 4 by Charlene Xiaoying Liu. “Lily, attacking, missed everything.” Charlene said. “I just blocked.” It was the first time Charlene was upset in 4 by Charlene Xiaoying Liu. “Lily, attacking, missed everything.” Charlene said. “I just blocked.” It was the first time Charlene was upset in 4 by Charlene Xiaoying Liu. “Lily, attacking, missed everything.” Charlene said. “I just blocked.”

Over 40 Doubles

The Over 40 Doubles went to Chui/Dattel in 4 over McCoulum/Dick Hicks. Nothing too eventful here. Barry, for some reason known only to self, ripped his player number off his back, whereupon Dick said to the assistant umpire, “Can I take my number off too?” This brought Dick a yellow card from the blind/def/“umpire for “arguing.”

Over 40 Under 1800

The straight-game final here between Wisconsin’s Dick Peregrine and New Jersey’s Adam Jackovino had barely started when Dick was faulted—and would be again three more times before Adam, who plays in the Westfield, N.J. Thursday Night League, had push-hit his final winning shot nicking the table edge. Dick, you’d have to say, weathered a psychic storm warning—dark clouds had surfaced: “If I can’t get this umpire changed,” he mumbled on picking up a ball near me, “I’m defaulting.” But the darkness merely hovered; there was no outpouring. The match over, Adam, relieved, said, “I’m sorry the umpire was so tough. But this guy [Peregrine] had me really scared. I was afraid to hit—the ball kept spinning the wrong way.”

Over 50 Men

In this event, Neubauer 4, 3, 2, 7, 2, 5, 6, 3, 5, 8, 3, 10 coated home, with only Chui in the final giving him some semblance of a match. Herbert’s victims included Richard McAfée who’d earlier won the battle of the heavyweights over his longtime friend Ross Brown, and who later this summer would be off to Bhutan for two weeks to coach coaches for the ITTF. As if pulling stories about the Florida players he’d known out of his capacious “Everything” bag, Big Mac happened to mention that his father was a black belt in Ju Jitsu—which prompted Ross, who’d had quite a bit of martial arts experience himself, to tell us he’d once seen a master break a board with a handkerchief.

At the 2005 Vegas Closed, McAfée had switched from inverted to Neubauer pips. He was then able to play an entire day of matches. “The Neubauer racket slows the game down,” he said. “I’m not looping, not pushing off with my legs, so now my knees don’t swell up like they used to [though I could see as a precautionary measure he was still wearing hot pads on them].” He said he still had a lot to learn about how Herbert used his pips so effectively, but he enjoyed the rarity of playing against so many no-spin balls.

Five-time Florida Champion Greg Gingoed was another Neubauer victim—despite Pete May’s Disco Golf advice not to carom, Frisbee-like, a single ball into Herbert’s backhand (You didn’t know? Pete’s seeded #5 in his age event in the upcoming WORLD Disco Golf Championships held in, of all places, his hometown of Augusta. I don’t know what the prizes are, but Pete could do with a new suit.) Duan had (“C’mon! C’mon!”) advanced over Min Hsu in 4 (after Min had outlasted Eric Stamp 16-14 in the 4th), then had stopped Kodimula in 3. That brought him to the semi’s where he opened ominously against Neubauer by serving off, and then, though he often literally jumped at the chance to play Herbert, he couldn’t connect.

On the other side of the Draw, the two best matches were Dave Sakai’s quarter’s match vs. Hicks, and Dave’s semi’s match vs. 30-year arch-rival Chui. At 10-9 in the 1st against Hicks, Sakai got his spinny forehand loop in, but then Dick flashed in a backhand Dave couldn’t see coming. Next points, strokes the same—but Dave’s forehand went in, and Dick’s backhand didn’t. The two continued to play long pushing points, with Sakai particularly looking for an opening to score with his forehand loop to Hicks’ forehand. Up 10-9 in the 2nd, Dave couldn’t close, for Dick got a backhand in. Then Dick snapped in another, but he couldn’t close, for Dave looped in a winner: 11-9, 12-14. Then Hicks missed a backhand: “Aw, Dick,” he said, “other corner.” But Dave unwisely set up a forehand for Dick and it went in: 13-12. Then Sakai spun in a ball, and, after he seemed to tempt Hicks repeatedly to swing a forehand, Dick didn’t, and Dave finished him off with another winner. Finished him off, period—for the 3rd game wasn’t close. Dick said later that Dave’s loop “dived under my stroke.”

Against Chui, Dave’s up 1-0 and 8-9 in the 2nd when he’s faulted for not throwing the ball up high enough. However, he follows that by getting in a harder than usual loop, wins the next point as well, but then jabs Ming’s serve into the net. At 10-9, Chui fails to return serve, but luckily gets an edge: 11-10. Dave scores a forehand, and goes two games up when the umpire faults Ming at game point. After that, Ming would later say, he’s afraid to use his backhand serve for the rest of the match.

Nevertheless, he’s of course hanging in there. In fact, is doing considerably better than that—moves from 2-2 to an 11-6 win in the 3rd. At 4-4 in the 4th, Dave’s serve is judged not “nearly vertically upward,” and he loses that game at 7. Match all even. The 5th couldn’t be closer—and mercifully the umpire stays out of it. With each of them yelling encouragement, exhorting self in much the same way—(“YEAH! C’mon!”... “Yes! Yes! That’s it! C’mon!”)—for 6-8, 9-7, 10-9. 11-9, anyone’s match. Ming slams, misses. “YEAH! One more. C’mon, work!” says Dave. He serves...follows into the net. Chui gets an opening—crack!—the ball goes in. Then Dave fatally errs. The prize money difference isn’t much: $75—which is what Sakai gets. Maybe enough to take wife Donna to dinner? After all, she sat through this whole long match...again.
Over 50 Women
In the one Over 50 Women’s semi, Bella Livshin beat Terri Lee Bell who received from a Japanese umpire a carefully wrapped present. Which was what — can you guess? Terri opened it to see, dangling from a string, a little bell. In the other semi’s, against Suzanna Sanders, Charlene Liu was up 1-0 but down 7-3 in the 2nd when — zowie! — she took 12 points in a row and broke open the match. Ah, but as Suzanna’s now cancer-free husband Bob says, “There’s table tennis and there’s life. And I’m fortunate that I know the difference.” Suzanna too — she not only continues to win State Games gold in table tennis and swimming, but she and Bob also enjoy traveling and will soon be on their way over to Harper’s Ferry and Appomattox.

In the final, Charlene was up 1-0 and at 10-10 in the 2nd game when the umpire faulted her, said that in serving backhand she had not tossed the ball “nearly vertically upward.” Charlene lost that game 12-10. In the 3rd, Charlene, who later said she was being careful about her serve, was down 9-10 when she again served backhand and was again faulted. This didn’t sit well with her, for it was only when her opponent got 10 that a fault was called. Then her husband came over before the 3rd game and when she talked to him about what she felt had been an injustice (Bella had been speaking with a friend) the umpire gave them, and only them, a yellow card because another player had designated they had coaches at the beginning of the match. For Charlene that was it — she’d had it … and defaulted.

Over 50 Doubles
The Over 50 Doubles was won by Bill U(kapataysakul), who says he plays 4 or 5 times a week, and Chui who, coaching at a church on Saturdays (“I teach them how to hook serve; they pick it up pretty fast”), says he charges $5 a person but allows any A student in free. “How do you know they’re an A student?” I asked him. “If they look smart,” he says. Runner-ups, 11-7 in the 5th, were Hicks/McCoullum. Down 7-3 in that last game, they rallied to 7-all, but Dick, maybe afraid that Chui, who’d been hitting well, would whack in more winners, decided on a preemptive, preventive strategy, but, bummer for him and Hank, his backhand loops didn’t go in.

Over 60 Men
The only early 5-gamer in the Men’s 60’s was won, 13-11 in the 5th, by a waist-braced Bill U and his soft, “nothing” balls that just kept coming steadily back — over Indianapolis Club stalwart Al Grambo, who years ago had been coached in Cleveland by 6-time U.S. Champion D-J Lee. In the one semi’s, Hicks, having dispatched Bill, met the dreaded “Dr. Evil,” as one fellow dubbed Neubauer, and, engaging him in table-strategy forensics, won the 11-5 1st-game argument — namely that Dick wasn’t going to hit into Herbert’s strength, his half-block/half-chop defense (a la former Iranian U.S. star Houssagain Bezzorazedeh). So, o.k., Neubauer and his black pips on light, balsa wood blade would hit at Hicks. Except, lucky to win the 2nd, 11-9 on a net, he discovered in the process that, dummy, he ought not to be hitting to Dick’s backhand. Thus, in the 3rd and 4th games, Herbert wised up, and, though down in both 4-1, scored devastatingly to Dick’s forehead to win 6 and 5.

In the other semi’s, it was Brathwaite vs. Dell Sweeris. George was initially upset because the umpire, without warning, faulted him for not removing his free arm “from the space between the ball and the net,” but twice merely warned Dell that he was, as George put it, serving out of his hand. Down 2-0, Brathwaite started opening to Dell’s backhand, and this proved effective. Also, George had no alternative but to risk killing Sweeris’s high spin balls. Even then, the Chief was down 8-7 before running out the game and match. In the final, George had no chance against Neubauer, primarily because he found Herbert’s blocks so difficult to lift, and, because, since Herbert stands tall and upright, he slap-hits down and through, producing a low ball that’s hard to return.

Over 60 Women
In her 1st round Women’s 60’s match, Sanders defeated Adi Laxmi Krishnan, 5, 5, and 2 — but had to go 5 games to do it. Then, while Danuta Andrzejewska was eliminating Francine Moore in her semi’s, Suzanna was downs former professional tennis star Alice Tym, a World #13 contemporary of fabled greats Billie Jean and Martina. Although Danuta no longer has a coach in her Broward County play, she practices with men, and so continued to play well in besting Sanders in 4. After a 9-month effort, she’s finally adjusted to her Dr. Neubauer Boomerang pips, and says her Juic Shenron rubber gives her more power. Although Suzanna’s topspin placements continued to keep her opponent on the move, Danuta’s strong focus and persistent blocks allowed her to prevail.

Over 60 Doubles
Reaching the semi’s, but no further, in this Doubles event were Ray Filz/Gerard Schreuders 9, 10, 10, 9 over Fabio Marcolotti/Felix Troconis; and Jack Howard/Tim Boggn 7, 9, 9, 9 over Granno/Bobby Petty. Winners were Hicks/Sweeris 9, 8, 7, 3 over the service-signaling team of Bill U/Bill Ryan. With games tied at 1-1 (and only a single fault called — on Ryan), the Bills led 8-6 in the 3rd when suddenly Bill U needed a 10-minute injury Time Out. His left leg was bothering him (his right one was already taped at the knee). But he recovers to continue his incessant advice and encouragement to his partner, and the two take a 2-1 lead. They’re overwhelmed in the 4th though. In the mid-game 5th, Hicks calls Time, and goes up into the adjacent stands to his wife Norma. Yes, she has a band-aid and assists him in putting it round his finger. This seems to help, for from 9-all he team eked out the win. “Some really strange bounces on this table,” Bill U says.

Over 65
Entered in the 65’s were 19 men and one woman, Janet Sharp, who though she thought she was entering a Women’s only event was game to play. Hicks lost to Brathwaite in 4 in the final — said he wasn’t ready for George. The Chief, however, was ready for Dick after playing Neubauer, Brathwaite said, anyone else using long pips seemed much less of a challenge. Eligible for this event, though never considering entering it, was Boris Shafir, the famous Russian coach of the world-class Mazunov brothers. Though fit enough — he’s had a knee replacement and is scrupulous about his diet — he’s really not interested himself in competition except through his students, like young Marcus Jackson. Boris told me about his work at the Pikaville, MD Club: “I love coaching,” he said. “It’s my life. I stop giving lessons, I die.”

Over 70 Singles/Doubles
The Singles here had 14 men and, again one woman — circuit regular Millie Drake, a Ph. D. college Spanish teacher and union rep from Long Beach, CA. The winner was Knoxville’s Bill Neely — over Dick Peregrine, 11-9 in the 4th in the semi’s, and, on taking a pivotal 12-10 3rd game, over Lynnwood Smith in 4 in the final, after Lynn had stopped Bill Walk, 11-9 in the 4th. Clearly Neely, despite two knee replacements, was getting on better than ever, for he also won the 70 Doubles with Smith from Howard/Boggan. These two victories gave Billy his first ever U.S. Open titles.

Over 75
The Over 75’s saw Ohio’s Dean Norman score an upset over ex-Ohioan Boggan who was not fit to be tied, he was just not fit, period. Smith was the winner, for runner-up Peregrine had no answer to Lyn’s lefty backhand attack. At the 2006 World Veterans Championship in Bremen, where Americans Frank Devly and Joe Baltrus lasted deep into a Draw or two, Lyn reached the quarter’s in both the Singles and Doubles. But since then Lyn hadn’t played much, for he and his wife had spent almost two months in Sweden, as was their habit, visiting friends and relatives.

Over 80
The over 80’s (no use for an umpire to watch these players’ serves) saw Arthur “Buster” Chase nearing 90 but armed with his Dr. Neubauer/Juic Elite 999 racket, send sticky, spiny/non-sticky, non-spinnny “stuff” to Wiley Butler and runner-up Leo Egol. Leo told a local reporter that playing table tennis was “the best aerobic exercise a senior could have.” And Buster and his wife Julie said they enjoyed sailing, learning Spanish, and solving Sudoku puzzles. Alzheimer’s couldn’t dare tangle with this group.
Let's Talk About Improving Umpiring...

By Jack Howard, Member, USATT Hall of Fame

First, umpiring is a difficult and mostly thankless job. I applaud the efforts of most umpires who try to do a fine job. But, having said that, there are issues that should be addressed in an effort to further improve the excellence of tournament umpiring.

First, the purpose of a tournament is to provide a level playing field for competing players. Tournaments are NOT to provide an exam for umpires. It is vital that all umpires understand that they should be reluctant to impose penalties by rules many of which are subjective at best.

As an example, I shall now prove that by taking certain parts of the subjective service rules to an extreme, no one in the history of table tennis has ever served legally!

Rule 2.06.01 ... The server shall then project the ball nearly vertically upwards without imparting spin, so that it rises at least 16 cm ...

Comments:
1. Since “nearly” could be interpreted stringently so as to make any serve not complying, and further since it is impossible to have the path of the ball exactly vertical, any serve could be faulted for not being projected “nearly” vertically.
2. Since it impossible to project the ball upwards without the ball spinning, even if slightly, any serve could be faulted for having spin imparted.
3. The height of 16 cm deserves special consideration. Any serve which comes close to 16 cm may or may not be above or below 16 cm and thus opens the door for capricious faulting. While this may not result in all serves being faulted, along with comments 1. and 2., all serves could be faulted.

4. Since some umpires (a small minority, I am happy to say), insist on using tournaments as an umpire exam, I have an exam question for these individuals. Let’s throw a ball up 15 cm during a service. If the umpires do not call a fault, they will be tied to a ship mast and flogged. Now, let’s throw a ball up 17 cm during a service. If the umpires do call a fault, they will be tied to a ship mast and flogged. I believe if this exam question was administered, these umpires views on service faults would change dramatically. Unless these fault-happy umpires have a micrometer in their eyes, they will surely be frequently flogged.

So what is to be done re service? Don’t ever call a fault? No, because some players intentionally or accidentally gain an unfair advantage by serving illegally, e.g. throwing the ball into the racket, hiding the service from their opponents, serving directly out of their hand, etc.

In these cases it is incumbent on the umpires to call a service fault, not in order to pass their umpire exam, but to try to maintain a level playing field for the players.

The bottom line is that the criterion for faulting a service is that the illegal service gains an unfair advantage for the server, not that the serve does not obey the letter of the very subjective service law. Finally, since many faults are on the edge and therefore difficult to fault correctly, rule 2.06.06.01 should be always, not optionally as in the rule, be followed: ... If the umpire is doubtful of the legality of a service he may, on the first occasion in a match, declare a let and warn the server.

Even in this rule, the word “doubtful” should be interpreted so as to almost always result in a warning.

Again, I applaud the efforts of most umpires who do an excellent job, and hope that the few well intentioned but sadly misguided individuals who do not, will reconsider their attitudes and join the majority of their excellently performing peers.
US Open Results

Men's Singles - Final: Aleksandar Karakasevic (SRB) d. Wilson Peng Zhang (CAN)

Women's Singles - Final: Zhang Mo (CAN) d. Jiachen Wang (USA)

U.S. Open Results

Singles - Final
- Zhang Mo (CAN) d. Jiachen David Wang (USA)
- Keinath d. Men's
- Ramos d. Tang Qi (USA)
- Huang d. Marina Shumakova (USA)

Singles - Final - Women
- Judy Hugh/Lily Yip d. Katsi Rakeezy/Poolo Mualik
- Feng d. Michael Landers, 3-6, 7-6, 7-6

Singles - Final - Youth
- Under 21 Men's Singles - Final: Misha Kazantsev
- Under 21 Women's Singles - Final: Zhang Mo
- Under 18 Singles - Final: Zhang Mo
- Under 16 Singles - Final: Kevin Yan
- Under 14 Singles - Final: Ariel Hsing

Rating Singles Event
- U2600 Singles - Final: Jose Miguel Ramirez-Marin (Can)
- U2100 Singles - Final: Bella Livshin d. Sara Solares
- U1800 Singles - Final: Jackovino d. Michelle Long
- U1700 Singles - Final: Kevin Yan d. Сhloe Elston
- U1500 Singles - Final: Yvonne Foster d. Dan Bruno
- Under 21 Men's Doubles - Final: Trevison/Akerlind
- Under 1800 Doubles - Final: Altina Fong/Kyna Fon

Rating Doubles Event
- U2400 Doubles - Final: Akerlind/Costa d. Christian Amidi/Khoa Vu
- Under 1450 Doubles - Final: Yvonne Foster d. Dan Bruno
- Under 1300 Doubles - Final: Yvonne Foster d. Dan Bruno
- Under 1200 Doubles - Final: Jennifer Weng d. Christopher Brewer

Disability Events
- Wheelchair Open - 1st: Andre Scott
- Standing Disability - 1st: Ashraf Mustafah
- Standing Disability - 2nd: Mervin Davis
- Standing Disability - 3rd: Bob Bowland

USA Table Tennis Magazine • September/October 2006
BASICS CORNER: Backhand Flip (also called Flick)

Text & photos from ITTF Level 1 Coaching Manual, Courtesy of ITTF

Those interested in this manual should go to www.itf.com

The flip is an attacking stroke against a short ball, using mostly the wrist and forearm. The starting position is the same as for the short push, so that the player can alter the direction, speed and spin as well as flip or push the ball short or long, with a quick change of the wrist. The flip will use more of an upward brushing action against backspin, while more horizontal against no spin, sidespin or topspin. A strong contact will also minimize the effect of the opponent's spin. For a ball wide on the backhand it is preferable to step forward with the left foot, which also has the player in a good position for a follow-up forehand. In the middle to backhand area, the right foot moves under the table. Quick recovery is essential as the follow through over the table leaves the player in a vulnerable position.

Preparation
The right leg moves under the table for right-handers with the body angled forward and the arm slightly bent.

Swing
The wrist is drawn back and the racket is neutral and below the ball against backspin, and more open and behind the ball against no spin, sidespin and topspin.

Contact
Contact is at the top of the bounce.

Follow Through
The racket continues to move forward and upward, finishing with the arm fully extended and racket in a closed position.

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TIP OF THE MONTH: September
The Four Talents
By Carl Danner

World-class players all have excellent power, quickness, movement, and consistency. Of these, which should developing players consciously emulate? My votes go to movement and consistency, which win more matches than power or quickness ever will. You can create tremendous pressure in matches merely by getting into position for reasonable strokes you rarely miss. Such an approach forces opponents to hit repeated winners to earn points, something not many players can do.

Additionally, the good form you will need to be mobile and consistent will indirectly unleash the other two talents. Efficient strokes will allow your natural quickness to emerge without additional effort; and, it's easy to ramp up the power once you are in position to make a technically sound swing.

TIP OF THE MONTH: October
Don't Overhit Winners
By Carl Danner

There really is nothing worse than clubbing a high ball off the table with your opponent out of position. It's like missing an open lay-up in basketball, and has the same psychological impact on you (oh no) and your opponent (whooppee!). Such errors often result from overhitting — swinging too hard or too fine at a ball that just needs to be stroked cleanly.

To help prevent overhitting, practice hitting consistent winners. Have your practice partner feed you high balls or deep easy pushes while you go for perfection — ten out of ten, each time. Focus especially on your footwork, because poor positioning is a frequent cause of this problem. If you're moving and aware of the concern, you will be on your way to a remedy.

Table Tennis on "Get Smart"

An episode of Get Smart featured table tennis. The episode, entitled "Die, Spy," first aired on March 30, 1968. It features various table tennis "devices" see above. Here is a description of the TV episode from ABC. (Photos & info contributed by Robert Trudell.)

A KAOS agent quit when refused a promotion, tried without success to join CONTROL, then formed his own band to destroy both agencies. Max, along with a new recruit named Samuels, travels the world in search of this nemesis who has changed his face through plastic surgery but can be flushed out by his passion for Ping-Pong. The episode echoes "I Spy," with "I Spy" star Robert Culp in a cameo as an Istanbul waiter.

L-R: Maxwell Smart as the "Masked Marvel"; a shortwave ping-pong paddle radio; a ping-pong paddle gun; and a ping-pong ball grenade.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • September/October 2006
If you believe you should be on the Olympic Eligible list, contact Doru Gheorghe at USATT, 719-866-4583. ed@usatt.org. You must be an Olympic Eligible USATT member and have played in the past year to be on the list.

TOP OLYMPIC ELIGIBLE MEN

1. IL 2776 Fu, Shu (Sara)
2. CA 2587 Reed, Jasna
3. CA 2777 Wang, Chen
4. TX 2477 Reed, Jasna
5. CA 2424 Banh, Tawny Ai
6. CA 2416 Li, Nan
7. CA 2434 Huang, Yao Xi
8. CA 2435 Wang, Jiachen David
9. NY 2534 Shao, Yu
10. CA 2297 Chen, Diane Dongye

TOP OLYMPIC ELIGIBLE WOMEN

1. NY 2577 Wang, Chen
2. CA 2580 Fu, Shu (Sara)
3. TX 2477 Reed, Jasna
4. CA 2424 Banh, Tawny Ai
5. CA 2416 Li, Nan
6. CA 2384 Huang, Yao Xi
7. CA 2352 Lee, Jacqueline
8. NJ 2326 Hugh, Judy
9. OR 2323 Ping, Whitney
10. NJ 2303 Yip, Lily

This list was compiled on 08/11/06 (ages are as of that date) and includes all tournaments received through 08/15/06. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played since 04/05/06 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2006.

Tournaments Processed

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New Tournaments Included in Ratings

Rocky Mountain State Games
Summer 2006 Broward TT Open
Brooklyn TTC Open
Sacramento Summer Open
TX Wesleyan Univ. July Open
Maryland Giant RR
Rocky Mountain Train Wreck Open
Sportsfest X 2 Player Team
Georgia State Games
Maryland Circuit
Power Pong Open
US Open
So. Florida US Open Warm-Up
NC State Games
Spin Open
California State Open
STTC 20th Anniversary Open
Davison June Open
Maryland Giant RR
Rose City Open
New Jersey Open
Ocala Open Table Tennis Tournament
Framingham TTC June Open
Brooklyn TTC Open
Indy Giant RR & 2-Man Teams
Paddle Palace Seattle Open
Maryland Circuit
TX Wesleyan Univ. June Open
CITC Glenview Summer RR Open
Pensacola Spring Open
Ben Hill/Stiga Open
Ohio Closed
Meiklejohn North American Seniors Open
NY State Open Junior Championship
Washington Davis Cup Style Team Champ.
Cary Memorial Weekend Jamboree RR
Davison May Open

Ratings Questions?

You can now search for all your results online at www.usatt.org. Should you have any ratings-related questions, contact Felisa Huggins, USATT Headquarters, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. To find out your rating if you cannot access our website, send a self-addressed, stamped postcard with your name and the date of your last tournament. You may also contact us at 719-866-4583 or by e-mail at ratings@usatt.org.

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### Additional Information

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September 2-3 - 2006 Berkeley Open, Berkeley, CA. Contact: N.A.T.T., 301-738-8250. info@natabletennis.com. 

September 2-3 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

September 9 - Sarasota TTC Fall Open, Sarasota, FL. Contact: Eugene Shilveyzer, 813-955-3440. eugenesh@verizon.com. 

September 16 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

September 17 - Brooklyn TTC Open, Brooklyn, NY. Contact: Nison Aronov, 718-916-4662. weixia042@hotmail.com. 

September 23 - Austin 2006 Fall Open, Austin, TX. Contact: Don Wang, 512-657-5505. jareed@txwes.edu. 

September 30 - Heart of Florida Open, Haines City, FL. Contact: Ray Spann, 863-965-0760. rayspann@verizon.net. 

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

For over 60 years, STIGA has been the leader in developing table tennis blades that deliver speed and control. Today we are proud to add to our rich history with the new Optimum blades.

**Optimum Carbo**

The Optimum Carbo combines five plies of premium wood with four ultra-thin layers of carbon fiber to create the fastest blade in STIGA's Optimum family. Similar to the Optimum PLUS in construction, but stiffer with a larger sweet spot, the Optimum Carbo is built for speed.

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**Optimum PLUS**

The new STIGA Optimum PLUS blade combines Crystal Technology with the outer plies from STIGA's popular Offensive Classic blade.

STIGA's recently introduced Optimum SYNC blade, featuring Crystal Technology, has become very popular. While most players who try it love it, a few have requested a faster blade. This prompted STIGA to create the newest member of the Crystal Technology line: the Optimum PLUS. The Optimum PLUS is a five-ply blade that uses the same outer plies as the best-selling STIGA Offensive Classic blade. It is faster than the Optimum SYNC, although the Optimum SYNC is a bit lighter. Thanks to Crystal Technology, the Optimum PLUS is much lighter than most blades of a similar speed.

Crystal Technology is STIGA's unique process that hardens the surface of the blade, thus increasing its speed. You will be amazed by the crystalline appearance of blades treated with Crystal Technology and by the extra zip on all your shots.

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Many players choose the fastest blade on the market with the idea that it will improve their offense. However, experienced players realize that not only must you be able to produce lethal attacking shots, but you must also be able to defend and counter the loops and smash shots of your opponent. At STIGA, we are well aware of the need to synchronize speed and control in today's modern game. We surveyed over 30,000 experienced players to determine the ideal mixture of speed and control that today's player needs. Using this information, we have created a new blade that is perfect for every player that realizes the need to balance offense with defense.

For more information, specs, and prices on all STIGA products, visit us at ping-pong.com/ttpioneers, call us at 1-800-319-PING (7464), or send us an email at info@stiga.com.

**Optimum Seven**

The Optimum Seven turns the traditional seven-ply blade formula inside out. Our engineers learned long ago that if you do things the same way that everyone else does, you will get the same results. In this case, that wouldn't suffice as we charged them with creating a faster blade that still had outstanding balance. Their solution was to make the center core thinner and the outer plies thicker. To this, we've added our Crystal Technology to harden the surface of the blade, thus increasing its speed. The excellent result is a blade that meshes well with all our high-tech rubber technologies, including Nano Composite, Mega Tension, ACS, and MR. The Optimum Seven is designed for today's aggressive players. You won't be disappointed.

STIGA®
Justen Yao

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2006 US Open U-13 Doubles Champion
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US National Junior Team at 2006 North American Championships - with Attitude!
I want to start out by thanking the Chris Evert Children's Hospital at the Broward General Medical Center. With their generous sponsorship and the co-sponsorship of Newgy Industries, Stiga, Total Bank, Broward Table Tennis Club, CSCCA, and other contributors, we were able to host this prestigious tournament. We attracted not only players from around the United States but 10 other countries including the soon to be U.S. Open Champion Alexander Karakasevic of Serbia.

The tournament started out with our youngest (under 10) and our seniors (over 60) battling it out in their events. Brianna Gibbs (FL) won Under 10 while Andrew Shum (Wisconsin) took second, Sammy Huq (FL) third and Nate Chan (FL) fourth. In Over 60, Frank Cortes (FL) defeated Leszek Filipowicz (FL) in the final.

Under 2200 was laced with international flavor throughout the RR groups. This brought some upsets. In the semifinals, Aleena Edwards (Trinidad) defeated Michael Goedde (FL) and Bruce Ellis defeated Tilak Mitra (both FL). Edwards was victorious in the final over Ellis.

Under 800 had two groups of juniors with Victor Miao defeating Brianna Gibbs in the final while Samail Huq and Viviana Gonzalez made the semifinals (all FL).

The Women RR groups had many upsets and three-way ties. In the final it was Andrea Estrada winning it over Aleena Edwards. The Solares sisters, Maria Jose and Maria Alexandra (both Guatemala), shared 3-4.

Before the start of the Under 1550 event, play was halted to install the new inductees to the Florida Table Tennis Hall of Fame. First to be inducted was Caron Leff for her outstanding contribution to table tennis in South Florida. Second was Greg Gingold, who started his playing career in South Florida and went on to become state champ three years running. Third was Batd Brenner for his outstanding contribution to building table tennis in South Florida. Our fourth inductee was the deceased Fred Fuhrman, who was instrumental in starting table tennis in South Florida. Accepting on behalf of his family was Caron Leff. Our fifth inductee was Terese Terranova for her contribution not only as a player but as a full-time coach and promoter of table tennis in South Florida.

The Under 1550 event was all Florida players in the semifinals. Shek Kong defeated Nesley Mills and Wayne Haye defeated Pablo Carvajal (all FL). In the final, Kong was victorious over Haye.

Over 40’s started with eight groups, including 11 players rated from 2011 to 2491. Alexis Perez (NY) was seeded out. In the semifinals, Perez defeated Bin Hai Chu (FL) while Carlos Sosa (formally of Cuba, now Miami) succumbed to Chin-Hsiang Chen (Costa Rica). Before coming to Costa Rica to coach, Chen was the #1 player in Taiwan from 1980-86. This was his first competition in 13 years. Chen found himself in the losing end in the final against Perez.

In 14 & Under Boys, Brian Lam (FL) defeated Ivan Arcos (Equator) in the final. Victor Miao defeated Jeffrey Haskel for third (both FL).

In the Under 2050 semis, Krassimir Tenev (FL) defeated Richardo Lee (Jamaica) and Terence Scarlett (the upset winner in his group) lost to Osmiel Garcia (FL). Garcia went on to defeat Tenev in the final.

In Under 1000, Milt Klompus defeated Alfred Cormier in the final (both FL), with
Victor Miao and Nate Chan making the semifinals.

Saturday ended with the Under 2550 players in heated RR groups laced with U.S. and foreign players looping, chopping and smashing their way to the round of 16. The quarters found Sasa Drinic (formerly Serbia, now Team Killerspin) taking out Omar Flores (Guatemala), Jose Ramirez beating Alexis Perez, Keith Alban falling to Yosmelli Vadillo (after being up 2-1 and 10-0) and Ben Johnson defeating California’s Freddie Gabriel. In the semis, Sasa Drinic defeated Ramirez, and Johnson (Keith’s training partner) helped heal some wounds by defeating Vadillo. Johnson came out victorious over Drinic in the final.

Sunday started out with everyone in the Under 1700 event bright eyed and bushy tailed and ready to do battle. This event was all Florida players except for one from the quarters on. The semif had Robert Compton losing to Roberto Galvez, and Tommy Jenkins going down to Kent Shum (Wisconsin). Shum was victorious over Galvez in the final.

The next event started the long, hard road to the Championship Final. With the quality of players in the Open it’s no wonder we saw some upsets but because two players advanced our upsettee’s got a reprieve. The second-place finishers battled with Pradeeban Peter-Paul (Canada), Chin-Hsiang Chen, Ben Johnson and Yosmelli Vadillo filling out the last four spots to start the round of 16. This round was action filled with tile #1 seeded Aleksandar Karakasevic (Serbia) defeating Johnson, Thomas Keinath (Germany) defeating Vadillo, Stefan Feth (California by way of Germany) defeating Chen, Peter-Paul defeating Omar Flores, Robert Roberts (Barbados) defeating Freddie Gabriel, Drinic defeating Ramirez, Keith Alban defeating Trevor Runyon (California) and Joseph Dibbs (Jamaica) defeating Paul David (NY).

The quarters started with Karakasevic defeating Dibbs, Feth defeating Roberts, and Keinath defeating Alban. The only upset was Drinic over Peter-Paul.

The semi’s found the top two seeds playing teammates. While top-seeded Karakasevic and Drinic had some great looping and lob points, and it went to the seventh game, Karakasevic was the victor. In the other half we had Keinath and Stefan Feth battling with serve and follow and looping points, with Keinath the victor in four.

Before the final began we had our traditional Chinese Lion Dance to bring good luck to the players. This was compliments of the Coral Springs Chinese Cultural Association. This year is their 20th anniversary serving the South Florida Multi Cultural community. This was followed by a plaque presentation to the Chris Evert Children’s Hospital, the planning committee and people instrumental in putting this prestigious tournament together. NOW FOR THE FINAL!!

Thomas Keinath won the toss and starts the match. They stay close throughout the first game with both looping and flip-killing serves. Just when you think Karakasevic has taken control Keinath pulls even and wins the first game 11-9. In the second Karakasevic takes the lead with some great short game points and never relinquishes it to win 11-8. In the third game Karakasevic starts out with a 6-1 lead with incredible backhand loops. Even though Keinath blocked some, Karakasevic had them covered with another backhand winner. Little by little Keinath climbed back by pressing Karakasevic back from the table where all he could do was lob and Keinath could finish the point. At 8-8 Karakasevic managed to regroup and finish with three winning points. In the fourth it seemed that Karakasevic was still tired from the third game and Keinath was all over him to win 11-7. The fifth was just the opposite with Karakasevic coming out strong and winning easily, 11-6. With a strong start in the sixth from Karakasevic it would be over but again Keinath was like a mosquito that wouldn’t go away. He kept buzzing around with short flips and angles until he stung with an 11-7 win. We all thought the seventh and deciding game would be a barnburner but Karakasevic could not stop Keinath from winning this great battle 11-5. Match and Championship to Thomas Keinath, 9-8, 8-7, 6-7, 5-11.

In Under 1200, unrated Xiong Sizheng (Amy Huang’s visiting grampa from China) won his group but couldn’t advance without a rating. Michael Kimmel defeated Stanley Lim in the final, with third and fourth shared by Victor Miao and Milt Klompus in an all-Florida semifinals.

Next up was 18 & Under Boys. With a lot of $$$ at stake, Trevor Runyon (in between his matches in Championship), found enough strength to defeat Jorge Puga (Equator) in the final. The Lam brothers (Kevin and Brian, FL) shared third and fourth. In 18 & Under Girls, Andrea Estrada of Guatemala defeated Amy Huang of Florida.

Under 2350 had three upsets in the RR groups, with Raymond Liang defeating Kit Jeerapuet (both FL), Alcena Edwards (seeded third in the group) defeating Oscar Milian (FL), and Santiago Cordova (Equator) defeating Ping Lu (FL). In the semis, it was Hector Gatica (Guatemala) over Shawn Embleton (NY) and Alex Aponte (FL) over Lester Sanjay (Guatemala). In the final Gatica was the victor over Aponte in a grueling five-game battle.

The last event to start on Sunday was Under 1400. The top seed in all but one group was upset by the second seed. In the semifinals, Michael Kimmel lost to Yvonne Foster of Jamaica, who played head and shoulders above her rating. In the other semis, Shek Kong defeated Herve Fanini-Lamoine. In the final Foster was too strong for Kong.

And so ends this great tournament for another year. I want to thank all my helpers for a great tournament! Here’s hoping next year will be BIGGER and BETTER!!

**United States Anti-Doping Agency**

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

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New Jersey Open on the 2006 STIGA NA Tour

By Alan Williams  Photos by NATT  Piscataway, NJ  June 17-18, 2006

One of the most satisfying feelings following a STIGA Tour event is to realize how many questions have been answered. The New Jersey Open provided us with definitive responses and a great competition! Coming into the tournament, NATT was concerned about the slowness of the entries arriving and we worried that so close to the U.S. Open, attendance might be sparse. A field of 200 eventually appeared. The Open Singles draw included a sizable contingent of players new to us, many with estimated ratings, and we wondered about their accuracy. We needn't have, as the results clearly showed. The Open Singles field was remarkably strong, so strong, in fact, that Adam Hugh, the 9th rated player in the United States was only seeded 7th! Wang Chen, a 2650 player and U.S. Top Five was not even the "A" player in her Round Robin group.

This strength was due to the presence of our friends from Canada, the return of the German star Thomas Keinath and three newcomers from China, guests of Lily Yip and Barry Dattel. These three players, Song Fan Wei, Wang Bo and Li Zi, proved to be richly deserving of the high estimates Lily furnished us for our draw. These youngsters were spearheaded by 19-year-old Wang Bo, the top player in Zhengding province. Referee Pat Collins was assisted by Chris Lehman, Ross Brown, Jinhai Wang and Larry Bavly, stalwarts all, in officiating the matches. Play was clean and timely, the Werblin Center was, as always, accommodating to our demands as a sport, and the weather in New Jersey was impeccable. Tom Nguyen, Chris Troy, Matt Bailey (Rock on!) and I handled the control desk and logistics. Lily Yip operated the vendor booth and provided hot lunch service. STIGA, Table Tennis Pioneers, Senoda and Gerflor continued their season-long sponsorship, while additional contingent of players new to us, many with estimated ratings, and we wondered about their accuracy. We needn't have, as the results clearly showed. The Open Singles field was remarkably strong, so strong, in fact, that Adam Hugh, the 9th rated player in the United States was only seeded 7th! Wang Chen, a 2650 player and U.S. Top Five was not even the "A" player in her Round Robin group.

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As always, it's the players and participants who are the stars, from the smallest junior to the most determined senior! Four-star tournaments like this put all the varied aspects of our sport on display. Martin Theil and his hardbat play, Gary Gudzenko and his defensive tactics, International players searching for competitive matches and big purses, the Friend family from New Hampshire, celebrating their individual progress and forging a tighter bond, the sarcastic Andre Scott and the affable Lim Ming Chui, in short, us, ourselves, in all our glorious diversity!

But competition is still what it's all about, family reunion atmosphere notwithstanding. So here are some noteworthy performances to mention before we get down to the professional results. Martin Ackermann's deliberate pace and risk-avoidant style delivered him two titles, the Under 1700, in a seven-game win over Mark Croitoroo, and the Under 1850 over Martin Theil, again, a seven-game decision. Ramon Barrera, the man with the radiant smile, came second in Under 1400 to Amol Naiksatam, who solved Barrera's long pips, -8,-9,-9,9,9,8. Eugene Golant had more difficulty with Barrera, and lost the Under 1550 final to him in straight games. Samuel Godoy Jr. was, seemingly, everywhere, advancing deep into several events and trophied as the runner-up in both Under 800 and Under 950 to Kevin Cheung and Fritz Guenther, respectively. Kevin added a second place finish to Vikash Sahu in the Boys' Under 13 to go with his Under 800 win.

Raghu Nadmichettu had a pair of category bests, taking Under 4200 Doubles with his partner Rohan Gilkes over Marius Wachsler and Sam Mookerjee, and then defeating John Wetzler in Under 2375 in a great match, -7,6,-8,7,8,-11,8. "John's a great guy," Raghu enthused. "After the last time we played, he told me how I should have played against him, he's always eager to help junior players ... not that he rolled over or anything, he still played really hard you understand?" Yes, Raghu, we understand. John's a "great guy" one of the many people whose sportsmanship makes running these events a pleasure.

Larry Bavly nearly double-dipped, passing Vladimir Poradich in seven hard-fought games for the U-2250 honors, and came second to Barry Dattel in the Over 40. Larry's enthused about his continued weight loss and improved performances. Looks to me like a 2450 player in the making.

Joseph Wang did double-dip, claiming first place in Under 18 Boys by beating his club-mate Amarendra Sahi, and the Under 2125 rating event, in a thrilling seven-game match with Da Tang, -10,9,-2,9,-10,9,10! Tang, visibly disappointed with his loss, after leading 3-2, had nothing to hang his head about, really. He simply didn't have the gas left in the tank to close out the match against his older, bigger opponent. We suspect this pair has a rich future, and more chapters to write.

Dave Sakai and Lim Ming Chui wrote another chapter in their decades-long rivalry, this time Chui captured the Over 50 crown against Dave; -5,10,6,10,9. Donna Sakai was here too, but due to a bad case of tennis elbow, unable to compete. Her event, Women's Singles, came down to a wonderful Table One match.
between Lily Yip and Wang Chen, which Wang Chen won. Smiles and handshakes all around on that one.

A pleasure as well to see “Didi” De Souza, easily the most overlooked and least frequently mentioned of the U.S. “bubbling under” contenders. I have in mind those players, over 2300 and easily deserving of respect, who are just out of sight of the National roster but still easily outranked the standard tournament player. Didi has a powerful and aggressive game and we were happy to see him at an NATT event again. De Souza rose to the final of Under 2500 where he met Canadian newcomer Joji (say “Josie”) Yamazaki. Joji is now not only to NATT and the U.S., but Canada as well, being only there for the past two months. A quick aside here. The Canadians are doing something very right with their player training. Canadians often show at our events as a contingent, here including Kamkar-Parsi, Yamazaki and fellow traveler Samson Dubina. These guys are always courteous and well-mannered, happy and cheerful. They are building an esprit de corps with these group field trips, and their support of each other in training and in competition is lifting everyone’s level. It’s something everyone should do, from club players straight up the U.S. National Team. If you think that’s a shameless plug to register for the new USATT Teams League, you’d be right.

In any case, De Souza won the Under 2500 final, 4-1 against Yamazaki, who added a qualifying position in Open Singles and the Under 22 Men’s title to his carry-on luggage.

**Open Singles RR Groups**

**Group One: Keinath, Kamkar-Parsi, De Tran, De Souza**

Thomas Keinath is a world traveler and a frequent, welcome addition at any NATT event. World #72 coming into the tournament, his plan was to play here, go on to Chile for an ITTF Pro Tour event, and then compete at the U.S. Open. Right off the bat De Tran attempted to throw a monkey wrench into this well-laid plan, stretching Thomas to a sixth game. De played brilliantly throughout the group. Canada’s Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi then had his hands full with Didi De Souza, only narrowly gaining the victory 13-8,9,7,7-6, staving off a 200-point upset. Keinath posted a 4-1 victory over Didi and De Tran did the same, relegating the Georgian to fourth in the group. Thomas assured himself of the #1 position, 4-1 over Homayoun, so De held his fate in his own hands when lie was no match for his #2 of Group Three.

**Group Two: Wang, Hugh, Mueller, Yamazaki**

Wang Bo was the highest rated of the Chinese guests, and with Lily Yip’s input, was given an estimated 2750 for seeding. He certainly proved deserving of it! Here he defeated each of his Round Robin opponents 4-1 and emerged as the #1. The three remaining players staged a real back-alley brawl for the remaining QF slot. Joji Yamazaki has a very smooth and graceful loop attack, but lost to Adam, 4-1. Florian Mueller, the German entrant, lost to Yamazaki 4-2 after opening a 2-0 lead, but then defeated Adam on his home turf, 4-3! That left everyone with a record of 1-2 losses, so off to the tiebreaker went the match slip. Hugh’s game record within the three tied players was 7-5, besting Mueller’s 6-7 and Yamazaki’s 5-7 and Adam had earned the second advancing position. As he exited the tournament, Mueller commented, “I have been a little rusty and didn’t play perhaps as well as I hoped to. But I do love coming to NATT tournaments! I can always count on good competition, strong players, and a well-run tournament, too!” You’re welcome, Florian, come back anytime.

**Group Three: Zhuang, Song, Dubina, Nadmichettu**

David Zhuang is never boring! Always animated and fiercely competitive, yet possessed of a great sense of humor, it’s always a pleasure to see him play. At this point in his career, with his Pan-Am Gold Medal, Olympic Team experience and four U.S. Men’s Singles titles, he really has nothing left to prove, yet he continues to come out and “lay it on the line” and for that, we salute him! David was playing crisply here at Rutgers, so that increases the value of Samson’s Dubina 4-1 result, as he hung with the champ for the first three games before bowing out, 8,10,-6,5,5 for DZ. Right-handed shakehander Song Fan Wei survived opening jitters to top Raghu, 11,6,8,6. David then showed just how fearsome his skills still are by decimating Song, 8,8,4,4. Nadmichettu then dropped his next two matches 4-0 to David and to Samson, so the “B/C” match of Samson and Song was determinative. While he was determined, Dubina ultimately was outmatched against the Chinese guest, and 8,9,8, -10,8,8, Song Fan Wei becomes

**Quarterfinals:**

**Thomas Keinath vs. Song Fan Wei**

Doing the draw for the Open Singles was no walk in the park, as there was a clear desire to not place all three Chinese players in one half of the draw. But with three, there was no doubt that one half of the bracket had to contain at least two of them! As it turned out, both Li Zi and Song Fan Wei landed in the top half, and Song, by virtue of his second place finish in the RR was paired with the tournament’s top seed, Thomas Keinath. Well, this was what they had come for, wasn’t it? Keinath is richly deserving of his World Ranking, and showed it with a fine 7,2,-5,9,5 outcome, turning back a strong effort from the youngster.

**Adam Hugh vs. Li Zi**

Adam is U.S. ranked #9, so what does it say for the lefty, Li Zi that he advanced in straight games? By scores of 4, 6, 3, and 9, he never really let Adam get close. Adam was not despondent about the result. “Hey! These guys are good! I’m not surprised.”
David Zhuang vs. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi

Over the months I’ve come to have a real appreciation of Kamkar-Parsi’s effective playing style, his close to the table, angle-exploiting explosiveness. Here he opens quickly and is (9, 9) up two games to zero on the American. But with Joanie yelling encouragement from the sidelines, David finds himself and controls play from that point forward. He advances to the semifinals, -9,-9,6,4,5,8.

Wang Chen vs. Wang Bo

The draw may have solved the geographical problems, but it can’t be one that Wang Chen loves! Wang Bo is willing to go toe-to-toe with the lanky lady and he is too quick for her. He’s constantly able to misdirect Wang Chen and then explode through to the opening, 7,6,7.5.

Semifinals
David Zhuang vs. Wang Bo

Better than the spectators could know, David knew what he was facing here. Wang Bo has thick, muscular legs and a stocky torso, an implacable attitude and tons of modern, recent training in China. For all his subsequent International success, David was once in this same situation, a Chinese provincial champion able to venture away from home and dominate in America. David plays his best match to this point in the tournament, but he’s always fighting, fighting from behind. He loses the first game at 10, and the second game at 3. Soon he’s trailing 10-6 in the third game, but wins five in a row to lead 11-10, only to lose 14-12. David’s got great pride and comes out in game four like a man on fire, 11-5 he takes the game, and while he manages deuce in game five also, its 14-12 again for Wang Bo. Nothing in David’s experienced the opening, 7,6,7.5.

Thomas Keinath vs. Li Zi

Thomas is in fine form, and to be honest, the lefty from Zhengding looks a little scared. He’s a long way from home and playing World #72. Thomas is familiar with the hall from previous tournaments, and he’s never been a slow starter. It’s a learning experience for Li. Before he realizes that Thomas has a great flip return of serve, that he’s as deadly on the backhand side as the forehand, and that he never, never, never quits on a game, a point or a single ball, he’s trailing 3-0, 6, 9 and 4. Li does realize where the traps are and determined to make a better showing, wins the fourth and fifth games rather handily, 11-6 and 11-7. But Keinath nips this comeback in the bud and ends the match 11-9 in the sixth.

Final
Thomas Keinath vs. Wang Bo

The tournaments top two seeds meet in the Final, so we feel that answers the questions about the legitimacy of the draw! Everyone is anticipating a great match, and these are two great players, but you can’t really call it a dramatic success. Wang’s strategy here is to keep his serve short and heavily spun, and he is very successful. Thomas has real trouble flipping this rock, short and on the center line, but the push return is exactly what Wang wants to open with. On service return, Wang is amazing, disarming one of Thomas’ biggest weapons. While both men could put on a looping exhibition, should they choose to, it’s obvious early that the “interior game” and the first successful attack are going to decide this one. Thomas loses the initial game 11-6, and despite his best efforts, and growing success, he trails 3-0 (8, 11) before people have really settled into their role as spectators. “Come on, Thomas. Fight!” exhorts Herb Hodges from the sidelines. But he is fighting! 11-6, the fourth game goes to Thomas who is landing more backhand loops now than he did at the match start. But Wang Bo, slams the door, claims the title and takes the $1500 first-place check with an 11-4 drubbing in the fifth. Thomas isn’t making excuses, just stating facts when he says he’s tired, jet-lagged, and headed on to Chile. I have great respect for his accomplishment of playing all three of the Zhengding players as he moved through Single Elimination. But the real admiration must go to Wang Bo, who was absolutely unstoppable in his march to the title, beating Wang Chen, David Zhuang and Thomas Keinath.

Wow! The New Jersey Open certainly answered our questions, and ended with a stunning defeat of World #72 by a player without an ITTF ranking. But it opened up the obvious follow-up questions, “Are there any more like you at home?” and “When are you coming back?” It’s back in the truck with the tournament gear and on to prepare for the next tournament for your NATT stall: the US Open and the Junior Olympics upcoming in July and the Eastern Open at this very same site in August. But it’s doubtful that we are going to forget the New Jersey Open and the impressive game of Wang Bo!

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**Results**

**Open Singles**
- **Final**: Wang Bo d. Thomas Keinath, 6,8,11,-6,4;
- **SF**: Wang d. David Zhuang, 10,3,12,-5,12; Keinath d. Li Zi, 6,9,4,-6,-7,9;
- **QF**: Wang d. Wang Chen, 7,6,7,5; Keinath d. Song Fan Wei, 7,2,-5,9,5; Li d. Adam Hugh, 4,6,3,9; Zhuang d. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi, -9,-9,6,4,5,8.

**Women**
- 1st: Wang Chen; 2nd: Lily Ying.
- U2500: 1st: Didi De Souza; 2nd: Joji Yamazaki.
- U2375: 1st: Raghu Nandichettu; 2nd: John Mark Wetzler.
- U2250: 1st: Larry Bavly; 2nd: Vladimir Poradich.
- U1850: 1st: Martin Ackerman; 2nd: Marty Theil.
- U1700: 1st: Martin Ackerman; 2nd: Mark Croitoroo.
- U1550: 1st: Ramon Barrera; 2nd: Eugene Golant.
- U1400: 1st: Amol Naiksatam; 2nd: Ramon Barrera.
- U1100: 1st: Angel Alicea; 2nd: Ramita Dewan.

**U800/Unrated**
- 1st: Kevin Cheung; 2nd: Samuel Godoy Jr.
- U3200 Doubles: 1st: Emile Goldstein/Mark Croitoroo; 2nd: Daniel Stadden/Mark Fryberger.

**Feingold Memorial Senior Events**
- Over 40: 1st: Barry Dattel; 2nd: Larry Bavly.
- Over 50: 1st: Lim Ming Chui; 2nd: David Sakai.
- Over 60: 1st: Daniel Green; 2nd: Gary Guzdenko.

**Vine/Lo Junior Competitions**
- Under 22 Men
  - 1st: Joji Yamazaki; 2nd: Amaresh Sahu.
- Under 22 Women
- Under 18 Boys
  - 1st: Joseph Wang; 2nd: Amaresh Sahu.
- Under 18 Girls
  - 1st: Tammy Gu; 2nd: Christine Divita.
- Under 16 Boys
  - 1st: Tanyo Sakuraba; 2nd: Kevin Lee.
- Under 16 Girls
  - 1st: Isabella Chen; 2nd: Annie Guo.
- Under 13 Boys
  - 1st: Vikash Sahu; 2nd: Kevin Cheung.
- Under 13 Girls
  - 1st: Emily Yang; 2nd: Olivia Cheng.
- Under 10 Boys
  - 1st: Andrew Chen; 2nd: Brian Qiu.
- Under 10 Girls
  - 1st: Tina Lin; 2nd: Mackenzie Friend.
Interview with Jim Scott
“Big Whack” Director

By Sean O’Neill

PHOTO BY SEAN O'NEILL. ©2006.

The ladies of Big Whack (L - R: Cathy Xu, Valerie Chia, Alexis Jackson, Nozanin Donayoroiva) and Jim Scott

How did you get involved in table tennis?
I first played in my cousin’s garage in Corvallis, Oregon in 1957 at 14.

What are your fondest memories as a player?
Gaining 181 rating points in the 1990 U.S. Open at Baltimore with a string of “upset” wins. It was clear to me that the Northwest players at the same rating levels were far superior to the east coast players.

What are your best memories as a tournament director of the Pac-Rim Open?
Often having 8-15 of the top players in North America; 18 players in 1990 from Gotemba, Japan; four players and two coaches from Saigon team at my house for 10 days; Fan Yi Yong playing and winning six times; plus the highest U.S. Women’s prize money.

Tell us about the Portland Table Tennis Club. When was it created? How is it set up? Who are the key people?
The PTTC started in the 1930’s, to my knowledge. We have sonic in-service clinics for the PE teachers.

Describe the Portland School System Program that you have created.
The idea behind the school system we have developed is to help each school to form its own club after school. With this club, anybody who is a student may join the club and play for fun. Then the best ones may be selected to be on the school team. If the school shows interest, we do an exhibition at full assembly or at lunch. If during an assembly, we bring in some of their kids who play to join in on the assembly and give those kids some rewards for playing. If during lunch periods, we play and sign up 30-60 kids and turn the list back to them to follow up with to form their club.

How do you think things went this year?
On May 20-21, we held the 2006 STIGA BIG WHACK tournament. We gave away 24 trophies. Wow, there is nothing more satisfying than to see a kid admire his trophy and say how it was his first trophy ever. This year the level of play seemed so high. I can truly say that for the first time we have really developed a great group of skilled, interested young players who can compete with most anyone in our club.

How would you like to see the school program evolve?
As the years have gone by, we have tweaked the school programs, some for better and some for worse. Now we believe what we believed in the beginning: No matter what tweaks you make, sticking with your program of keeping the schools you have and adding 5-10 every year works. The size of the leagues grows. Team competition becomes more interesting for everybody. Sponsors are easier to find. The media works. The size of the leagues grows. Team competition becomes more interesting for everybody.

What would it take to go national?
With some major grants to take the place of our painstaking volunteerism, we can take the programs national. Then it takes endorsement of the right people in – and outside the USATT in order to get the ball rolling towards an organized approach to tens of thousands of new young players who become intent on being Top 12 juniors, having to beat out a few thousand competitors to make it there. We have the written grant plan, now we need the endorsements.

In 1997 we added a team event which carries with it perpetual trophies in elementary, middle, and high school levels separately for the boys and the girls. Through THE BIG WHACK, PTTC has involved 91 schools in the Portland metro area.
WHAT WE REALLY NEED IS TABLE TENNIS TO BE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM! How many times have we all heard this statement? Well, for the past fifteen years, Jim Scott and the PTTC (Portland Table Tennis Club) have been doing exactly this by creating outstanding programs targeted at kids in their community: The STIGA Big Whack singles tournament and the Portland School League.

During this period Jim sought the support of two ambassadors of the sport. The first partner Jim teamed up with was Larry Gajderowicz of Escalade Sports. Escalade Sports has sponsored the program possible with his generous support. The first-class equipment will be used by our community for generations,” Jim Scott proudly acknowledged.

The second individual that has had a huge impact on this program is the late Bob Viducich. Bob provided USATT memberships to students to encourage them to join the national association and share his love of the sport. To date, Bob has donated over 150 memberships to kids in the Portland school system. One of the saddest announcements at the tournament was that Bob had passed away during the event.

While Larry and Bob have had a huge impact on making table tennis a reality for kids in Portland, it has been the steadfast efforts of Jim Scott and Mark Kobernick that ensure that the program flourishes. Jim has learned the hard way that teams don’t just create themselves: you have to nurture them and feed them plenty of encouragement and support.

During the month of May, it is not unusual for Jim and Mark to be putting on three to four exhibitions a day at the various schools, signing up new players, speaking with school administrators, teaching physical education teachers, and whacking the ball back and forth with the kids. A bit of a piper of pong, when Jim arrives at a school during a lunch break or assembly, the kids’ faces light up.

Jim understands that quality equipment can make a world of difference in learning the game correctly. Getting a racket that can create spin is step one, so Jim will take inexpensive paddles and re-rubber them with older sheets donated by Paddle Palace to the program. Now the kids can loop and push the ball instead of just pinging it over the net. When a child has their own paddle, they can create spin is step one, so Jim will take inexpensive paddles and re-rubber them with older sheets donated by Paddle Palace to the program. Now the kids can loop and push with spin instead of just juggling it over the net. When a child has their own paddle, they have an incentive to join their school’s team or play in the STIGA Big Whack.

This year’s singles event saw a number of great battles at Portland State University. The presentation was first-class with each match umpired with a scoreboard. Big Whack T-shirts were available, in addition to school posters featuring mascots and team colors. In the premier event, David Baker, a middle linebacker for Roosevelt High School, beat the 2006 STIGA Big Whack AND THE Portland School League

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY SEAN O’NEILL

RESULTS

Boys’ High School – Final: David Baker (Roosevelt) d. Vu Le (David Douglas), 11,8,7; SF: Baker d. Kensaku Furushashi (Southridge), -10,7,5,5; Le d. Ronny Li (Westview), -7,8,9,-11,9; Bronze: Li d. Furushashi, 7,8,7
Girls’ High School – Final: Valerie Chia (Sunset) d. Cathy Xu (Wilson), 5,5,7; SF: Chia d. Nozamin Donayorova (David Douglas), 4,3,6; Xu d. Alexis Jackson (Benson), 8,9,5; Bronze: Jackson d. Donayorova, 3,4,8
Boys’ Middle School – Final: Frank Lui (Cheldelin) d. Raymond Xu (Stoller), 17,4,-8,7; SF: Lui d. Brian Chia (Stroller), 8,9,6; Xu d. Michael Chen (Salem), 3,7,-9,9; Bronze: Chia d. Chen 7-12,9,10
Girls’ Middle School – Final: Mary Dang (Gregory Heights) d. Nagini Reddy (Sunnyside), 8,-9,8-5,11; SF: Dang d. Tabina Nguyen (Gregory Heights), 5,4,7; Reddy d. Zoe Bluffstone (Maplewood), 9,6,5; Bronze: Bluffstone d. Nguyen, 9,2,4
Boys’ Elementary School – Final: Cordell Harris (Laurelhurst) d. Jacob Tietson (Laurelhurst), 5,6,5; SF: Harris d. Jonas Hanna (Laurelhurst), 8,8,4; Tietson d. Andrew Person (Laurelhurst), -5,-2,12,9,8; Bronze: Person beat Hanna, 9,8,8
Girls’ Elementary School – Final: Claire Henneberg (Laurelhurst) d. Amy Yin (Corvallis), 8,9,7; SF: Henneberg d. Mackenzie Stratton (Laurelhurst), 9,8,12; Yin d. Lauren Galaty (Laurelhurst), -7,10,-9,8,8; Bronze: Stratton d. Galaty, 5,9,9
Boys’ Middle School League: Sunnyside d. Gregory Heights, 10-6.
Vù Le of David Douglas HS in straight games for the Boys High School Championship. David's outstanding consistency, ball placement, and attacks were the difference in the match against Vù who was still catching his breath after a tough five-game semifinal match with Ronny Li of Westview.

In the Girls' High School event, Valerie Chia of Sunset beat Cathy Xu of Wilson High School in a three-game match. Valerie had trained in China with her brother Brian during the summer time and is coached by former U.S. World Team member Simone Yang.

The Middle School Championships were full of fireworks with Corvallis's Frank Liu of Cheldelin Middle School topping an all-star field of extremely promising seventh and eighth graders. In the final, Frank survived a 19-17 first game marathon to beat Raymond Xu of Stoller in four games. Michael Chen of Salem took the bronze over Brian Chia of Stoller.

On the girls' side of the event, Mary Dang of Gregory Heights and Nagani Reddy (Sunnyside Environmental School) went the distance in a deuce-in-the-fifth seesaw battle with Nagini saving two match points, getting a match point of her own, but then Mary putting it away for the victory. Mary and Nagini have the making of a great rivalry as both are active tournament players and often practice together.

Like all the other events, the Elementary School Championships had preliminary round robin followed by single elimination. The boys' event saw Cordell Harris lose a match in the round robin and then systematically dispose of all his opponents in straight games thanks to his outstanding ball control and consistency. In the girls' event, soccer goalkeeper Clair Hennebery (Laurelhurst) blocked, lobbed, and scrambled her way over Amy Yin of Corvallis.

First, second, and third place trophies were given in each event at an awards presentation where each player also received high fives from their competitors en route to perennial powerhouse David Douglas from repeating as champs. Roosevelt came to play, decked out in their black-and-gold uniforms with newly crowned singles champion David Baker. Seesaw matches took place with the favorites getting the upper hand and a few narrow escapes. When the dust had settled the final score was 9-7 with the trophy remaining in the hands of David Douglas High School showing their depth and determination.

The Girls' League champions went to Sunset in a full cross-country style round robin with Parkrose, David Douglas, Beaverton, Wilson, Reynolds and Benson all winning matches and getting on the board!

**Some Quotes:**

Steve Black (volunteer umpire): "It is nice to see so many new kids involved in the tournament this year. Many times, clubs have a problem bridging the gap between elite and beginners. This tournament clearly helps feed the new players into the sport at the grassroots level."

Michelle Nguyen (St. Ignatius HS): "I think it was pretty fun, and I thought it was kind of hard since it was my first time trying. I didn’t win any matches, but I was still proud that I tried my best."

Jim Hermann (head umpire): "The kids are great! It is so much fun watching them live and see their adrenaline rush as they fight for trophies. Having each match individually umpired along with shirt and ties gave the event credibility and made it easier on the umps to keep play under control. When there is an umpire in a uniform, the kids treat the sport and their opponents with tremendous respect."

Mary Dang (Gregory Heights): "I think the reason I won the Middle School Girls' title was that I had to think on my own even though Nagani was coached by Sean O'Neil. I believe I have her number in tournaments, even though Nagani tends to beat me a lot in practice."

Nagani Reddy (Sunnyside Environmental TTC): "I think I played well, but I could have done better. I could have used a better coach!"

Darell Potter (Sunnyside Environmental TTC Coordinator): "We have about 20-30 kids in our third to eighth grade program. We were very fortunate to be the recipients of some STIGA tables from the Portland school program. We meet weekly in both the winter and summer and practice and play matches after school with a local coach. Alan Panganiban, Jim is also helping us organize more team matches with the middle schools in addition to the K-5 schools. The kids had a great time this weekend, and getting a chance to play against other kids from outside the city was a big thrill."
THE LITTLE THINGS COUNT:

The Fishing of Vladimir Samsonov

BY WEI WANG, USATT HALL OF FAMER AND CERTIFIED NATIONAL COACH | PHOTOS BY DIEGO SCHAAF

It’s the first point of the match and a breathtaking rally is in its tenth exchange. Jack recovers barely from blocking a powerful loop wide to his backhand, regains his balance, anticipates perfectly and rips a furious forehand down the line, finally catching his opponent out of position and winning the point. The stands erupt in thunderous applause. Everyone will remember that point! Jack’s a hero. On the next point, his opponent serves, and he barely misreads the spin. The ball hits the tape on the net and falls back. If this were figure skating, Jack would be leading in style points, but in table tennis it is 1-1.

We all love winning the pretty points, and many of us tend to attribute more value to them than the short, unspectacular ones. Our sport’s rules, however, don’t. We build our technique toward being able to handle the “big” points, and of course that is very important. But many players have a tendency to neglect the little things. Maybe it’s because they know exactly what happened with the misread receive and know how to counteract it. “Next time, I’ll get it right.” That’s not something one can easily say after having been outplayed in a long rally that could have gone either way.

The attention to those little details actually yields a much greater bang for the practice time invested. A few hours invested in practicing a high-quality forehand drop shot may result in three or four points in a match. The same time invested in athletic, court-covering backhand and forehand ripping is unlikely to have equal short-term results, because to achieve that you need to build not only your stroke, but footwork and endurance, both of which require long-term programs to improve.

In the upper levels, the ability to produce that extra bit of spin, to reach that extra inch or two to focus just a little more tightly on the opponent’s serve, is often one of the distinguishing factors between very good players and top players. If you’ve ever had the opportunity to go to the World Championships — something I would whole-heartedly recommend to anyone who loves this sport — you will be amazed at the sheer number of utterly impressive players. Watching some of them practice will lead you to wonder how anyone could ever beat this guy, and how. And yet, when they meet a Boll, a Samsonov or a Ma it seems they have nothing to hurt them with.

We chose a sequence that illustrates the way Vladimir Samsonov (BLR) deals with a ball that has been played wide into his backhand. On 1 he is still ready for what he thought might be a shot to his forehand. As soon as he sees the placement, he moves his hand into position (2-6). Notably he keeps his upper body remarkably stable, still leaning to his right, rather than trying to increase his reach by leaning to the left. This allows him to track the ball precisely and keeps his balance steady; the weight on his right leg, which keeps his options for the next shot open.

Now comes the “extra effort.” Many players would either lob this ball, or, pulled so far out of position, would just block it back crosscourt, using the additional table length in the diagonal. Continuing from 6, Samsonov could just guide his hand forward and let the ball bounce back. Instead, he adds energy to it and, with an additional hop (7-10), gains the necessary control to place the ball to the forehand side, which catches his opponent off guard, having already turned in anticipation of a weak block to the backhand side. The ball is not only well placed, but the extra effort added spin, and so the shot: changed from a defensive block to an uncomfortably placed and spiny fishing shot.
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Samsonov is a master of balance. He rarely loses control over his upper body. He can pivot, bend and turn, keeping his head almost still, and from all positions, he can produce an authoritative shot. When such a shot comes from an extreme position, many opponents, expecting the easy put-away shot that others might produce, are unprepared and either miss outright or allow him to take over the initiative in the point.

This extra effort presupposes that the basic ability on which to build is already there. But it is not only at Samsonov's level, where that little addition yields results. At any level, a conscious focus on expanding beyond what we customarily do, even just a little, can have a big impact. Be it returning a serve, placing an opening shot or, as here, retrieving a wide ball, think about it when practicing. Look for ways to squeeze just that little bit of additional effort out of your performance. You’ll be amazed how much the little things count.
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