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**ON THE COVER:**

Xiao Han of East China University

Photo & Cover Design by Tom Nguyen ©2006

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The U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs was the temporary home for 19 USATT certified coaches that attended the three-day coaching seminar, where they were kept busy for more than 14 hours of training and playing during the recent seminar in October.

Our clinic started on Friday night from 5:00-8:00 p.m. The coaches took a short walk from the Athlete Center through the Irwin Belk Olympic Pathway to the Coaching & Sport Science building, where the instructors, Dan Seemiller (US Men’s Team National Coach), John Allen (Coaching Committee Chair for USATT) and Doru Gheorghe (USATT Executive Director & US Women’s Team National Coach) greeted us in a gym with six brand new Butterfly Space Savers tables.

Dan Seemiller and John Allen opened the seminar with a comprehensive review of the fundamentals and the importance of them, common strokes and their technical flaws. Some of the strokes covered included the forehand and backhand counter-drives, and the forehand loop against underspin and topspin. Then the coaches went out to the tables where they put into practice these theoretical principles, with feedback from the instructors.

On Saturday morning we continued with more advanced techniques, including forehand and backhand loop, followed by forehand and backhand pushes and their importance in the modern game. Then all the coaches practiced these strokes, again with feedback from the instructors. Seemiller and Allen emphasized the importance of technique and strategy in the execution of these important strokes.

In the afternoon we participated in the Fourth USOC Paralympic Military Summit with 35 recently injured service members attending. It featured clinics and competition in five Paralympic sports. Seemiller and Allen did an exhibition, and then the USATT certified coaches coached the military participants in table tennis. We also had the assistance of Andre Scott and Pam Fontaine, from Fort Worth and Dallas, respectively.

We next moved to our Gym and spent the rest of the afternoon working on more advanced technique and strokes, including forehand counterloop, footwork drills and multi-ball training. Seemiller and Allen demonstrated and illustrated a lot of the new trends and techniques used by the top players around the world in the modern game. Then the coaches hit the tables to practice the new techniques learned.

After dinner, we hit the tables once again for additional instruction on serve, return of serve, and practice drills. Seemiller, Allen and Gheorghe shared the most advanced services and other techniques used in modern table tennis.

On Sunday morning, both Allen and Seemiller gave presentations on stroke analysis and training, mental techniques and a comprehensive review on spin, speed, neutral positions and shot placement. In addition, Allen spoke about the USA Table Tennis League.

The U.S. Olympic Complex serves approximately 7000 athletes annually as part of their resident and short-term programs. There are nearly 130 resident athletes who live at the complex on a full-time basis for an average of three to five years, with each one among the very best in their sport. The resident athletes are selected by their respective national governing bodies to live and train at the complex. During our visit, there were athlete residents in men’s gymnastics, women’s volleyball, men & women’s weightlifting, and other sports.

Short-term programs include training camps, special competitions, and coach’s clinics. These programs may include athletes at various levels of competition (i.e. juniors, semi-elite, elite and Paralympic).

The following USATT certified coaches attended the seminar:

Instructors: Dan Seemiller, John Allen and Doru Gheorghe


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League of the Month:
The Kingston Ping Pong League
By Brendan Denvir

The Kingston Ping Pong League in New York hasn't been around long yet, but it's been very active since the beginning, with lots of excitement, rivalries, and upsets. Here are some of the best twists and turns so far:

1. Sean Denvir vs. Brendan Denvir - A father-son rivalry that just goes back and forth. Brendan has lost only to his father. Sean's style of play was built to compete with his son, giving him the best chance of winning. After many years of practicing by themselves, their matches consistently come down to the final points, often the most competitive matches in the Kingston Ping Pong League.

2. Andrew Catalano's rivalry with Denvir - Andrew is attending boarding school so he can only participate in weekend matches. Andrew's tennis talent showed that he had a lot of potential. He said that he was ready to take on Brendan in a showdown. Andrew has improved quite a bit and put up a fight, almost taking the first and second game. But Brendan fended him off, 11-9, 11-7, and 11-5. Andrew has gone back to school but is still improving. We can't wait until the next battle.

3. Upset Specials - Ranked fourth in our league, George Demosthenes faced his lowly ranked opponent, Evan D'Auge. George took him too easily. Evan stayed consistent (something he has been unable to do in the past) and George made his mistakes. After Evan dominated the first game 11-6, George realized he had to pick it up, and jumped out to an 8-2 lead - only to let Evan go on a 9-1 run and win. A smile crossed Evan's face with the huge win.

Paul Larios (ranked fourth) took on lowest ranked Brendan McEvoy for his first match of a round robin. Larios was so confident he considered playing lefty to show off, but changed his mind because he wanted to warm up for his upcoming match against Brendan Denvir. McEvoy just tapped the ball back consistently, as Larios made mistakes. After each point McEvoy won, he laughed and kept saying, "I got this." Larios finally realized his situation when McEvoy led 10-9 game point. McEvoy used the same strategy (tap) and Larios, oh so tentative, knocked the ball to the bottom of the net. The next game was deja vu for McEvoy. He kept tapping, laughing, and smiling as Larios stayed tight. Final Score: 11-9, 11-9. Spectators stormed the table and Larios refused to leave the table without a rematch. He never was given one, and McEvoy took advantage of his bragging rights.

We had been into ping-pong for a while, and when I found out I could start a league I knew it was a great idea. It has been - and just wait and see what happens this next year!

Club of the Month: Gwinnett Table Tennis Club
By Jon Gustavson

The Gwinnett Table Tennis Club is less than a year old. It is located in Lawrenceville, Georgia, at Rhodes Jordan Park Community Center. During its brief existence Gwinnett Table Tennis has had an eight-week tournament series, a USATT League, began group training, and moved from one table in a basement to five Butterfly Europa tables in a gym.

The table tennis program began as a USATT League. Many of the first members welcomed a place to play where they could go without having to fight Atlanta traffic. In a very short time it was clear that the club had outgrown the now two tables in a basement. An all-out search for a new location began. The searching paid off when Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation came through with a great location, five brand new tables, and their full support for a new Gwinnett table tennis program.

From the beginning an emphasis has been placed on player development. A training program began in October 2006 that allowed new players to learn the basics, with experienced players to practice with. It has been a success because of the cooperation of players working and helping each other.

Competition started with the USATT League. Next came a mini-tournament series. The popularity of the tournament series led to dropping "mini" from the name. The series brought in some of the best players in the Atlanta area and allowed new players to participate in their first tournament. A few weeks later, the first ever Potluck Team Tournament was held. Each team had a representative in each division and teams were drawn from a hat.

The Gwinnett club has gotten off to a great start. Training and competition in a relaxed atmosphere, with the excitement of a new and growing club, make for a great place to play.
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Spin: 11
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**Paddle Palace Special: $88.95**

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Optimum Sync
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Optimum Carbo
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fastest blade in STIGA's Optimum family. Handle: FL (lg), FL (sm), AN. ST/Wgt: 82 gm. Item: SSOPPN. CLASS OFF / SPEED 91 / CONTROL 61

Optimum Seven
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2005 European Champion Vladimir
Samsonov uses Tibhar
ades and rubber.
President’s Report
By Sheri Soderberg Pittman

Last fall the USOC ushered in a new era for USA Table Tennis through its decision to drastically reduce its 2007 resource allocation to USATT. In the past USATT applied the funding to elite athlete support and development. That funding provided a large percentage of the elite athlete budget. USATT’s budget for 2007 will be set after this issue goes to print. This month’s “association primer series” will focus on this news, its impact on USATT, and expected action items.

The USOC’s Evolution Toward a New Funding Policy

Through the late 1990’s, the USOC had generally provided USATT with funding in the neighborhood of $160,000-$250,000. When Norm Blake became the USOC’s CEO in 2000, there were many press reports that sports unlikely to medal would lose their funding. In fact, the USOC instead decided to give every National Governing Body (NGB) a flat minimum of $250,000. After the USOC governance reform, the figure went back to roughly the same previous amount.

As the USOC adopted a new structure through their governance reform, it also adopted as its mission: “To support United States Olympic and Paralympic athletes in achieving sustained competitive excellence and preserve the Olympic ideals, and thereby inspire all Americans.” It took the USOC a couple of years to regain staff and Board stability. During my tenure as USATT president, there have been 4-5 USOC presidents and 4-5 CEOs. With its new professional and volunteer leadership footprint in place, there is no reason to think that there will be any more sudden changes in the USOC’s new funding policy. It is, therefore, quite clear that the USOC intends to reward NGBs that are able to produce sustained competitive excellence, otherwise known as Olympic medals.

Resource Allocation to USATT

This is a grim new reality for USATT. The USOC’s commitment to devoting its financial resources to potential Olympic medalists is illustrated by the amount of direct athlete support it is providing to USATT #1 woman, Gao Jun. A summary of the USOC’s 2007 Resource Allocation for USATT is as follows:

- **NGB Support:** $30,500
- **Athlete Support:** $18,000
- **$48,500**

Elite Athlete Health Insurance Slots (free health insurance): 6

The USOC has approved for disclosure the following breakdown of funding it is providing to USATT for NGB and Athlete Support:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pan Am Team Trials</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>International Competition – Pan Am Games</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Gao Jun</td>
<td>$45,500</td>
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Athlete Support is subject to:
- Gao Jun must maintain a top-15 international rank to remain eligible for the NGB Funding and Direct Athlete Support. In 2008 the international rank minimum raises to top-10.
- Any athlete that achieves and maintains a top-15 international rank in 2007 is eligible for the NGB Funding and Direct Athlete Support.
- NGB Funding and Athlete Support will be awarded on a six month basis. Every six months the international rank will be evaluated to ensure the top-15 rank is being maintained.

The NGB payment schedule reflects the 2007 dates and amounts:

- **February 15:** $ 7,625
- **May 15:** $ 7,625
- **August 15:** $ 7,625
- **November 15:** $ 7,625

**Total:** $30,500

Previous Years’ Allocations Compared to Present Allocation

By comparison, USATT Treasurer Tong Lee put together the table below which reflects amounts received more recently and in comparison to a decade ago.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>900,335</td>
<td>916,510</td>
<td>1,272,788</td>
<td>1,091,880*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USOC Grants</td>
<td>219,861</td>
<td>216,872</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>168,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Revenue</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>15.4%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Athlete Development Expenditures</td>
<td>232,188</td>
<td>199,227</td>
<td>238,432</td>
<td>183,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Revenue</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>16.8%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on extrapolation of year-to-date data.

USOC’s Response to USATT’s Request for an Explanation

USATT’s Executive Director Dori Goegebeur requested an explanation as to why the USOC funds to USATT were cut so drastically. The USOC Sports Partnership Director who is USATT’s liaison with the USOC responded, “After a thorough review and extensive discussion on USATT’s plan, international results, and governance/Board challenges, it was our determination that USOC dollars are not currently impacting overall international performances and that this trend will likely continue for 2008 and 2012. Consequently, in a competitive pool with limited resources, we decided USATT is not a sound investment for the USOC at this time. This decision was not taken lightly, but it finally came to the point where we needed to re-evaluate our funding strategy with the NGB. We rarely get to talk about sport and pipeline development with USATT as the majority of our time and energy is spent on Board and governance issues. Until the Board and governance issues are resolved we question if the group can address and be truly committed to a long-term plan.

“All that being said, we are pleased with Gao Jun’s international results and that we are able to dedicate significant resources towards her training and competition schedule. She is by far one of the largest investments we are making towards a specific athlete, in any sport. This level of support is also available to any other athlete that achieves an individual international ranking of top-15 in 2007 and/or top-10 in 2008. Additionally, there are many USOC programs and services still available to USATT and its athletes, including Operation Gold, Elite Athlete Health Insurance, Tuition Assistance, medical services, Olympic Training Center use, Team Leader meetings, sponsorship opportunities, International Games support, etc.”

Resource Allocation Guidelines

The USOC’s guidelines for resource allocations, as alluded to above, are contained below:

“The USOC shall allocate resources to the NGBs and direct athlete support to the athletes with the goal of enabling athletes, through the NGBs, to achieve sustained competitive excellence at the highest level of international competition in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Achievement of the objective (sustained competitive excellence) may require the investment of USOC resources over a long period of time.
2. Support to NGBs should be customized based on the environment (competitive and otherwise) in which each NGB operates.
3. In order to receive USOC support, each NGB must commit to measurable and achievable goals which, if achieved over time, will meet the objective of the resource allocation process. If the goals are not met, the level of support, and the programs it is directed to, will be re-evaluated.”
4. Generally, support should be allocated with a view to maximizing the number of elite, international medals awarded to U.S. athletes, as well as maximizing the number of sports in which U.S. athletes medal. Recognition should also be given to the impact that a successful performance could have on the USOC’s ability to generate revenue.

5. Support to NGBs and to athletes should be minimized where it will have no meaningful impact on performance. This means that support should be minimized where there is no reasonable possibility that it will facilitate the ability of U.S. athletes to compete at the highest level of international competition, and also where U.S. athletes can be expected to compete at the highest level of international competition with or without USOC support. As a result of this guideline, some NGB’s may not receive performance-based support.

6. USOC Athlete Support will be allocated based on the existing guidelines (see Section K).

Impact on USATT

This resource allocation applies to the 2007 budget. USATT’s budget for the duration of 2006 was, therefore, not adversely impacted. USATT Treasurer Tong Lee and USATT Executive Director Doru Gheorghe analyzed what cost savings could be implemented for the remainder of 2006 in order to increase USATT’s projected year-end surplus. They also then drafted USATT’s 2007 draft budget.

The USATT Board of Directors will make final budget decisions at a meeting held in conjunction with the National’s in Las Vegas. The 2006 election process will be completed by then, so the re-elected and/or newly-elected Board members will participate in setting next year’s budget. With the USOC cut in funding, USATT will have to find ways to generate more income and reduce expenses. The Board may also choose to tap a portion of the roughly $300,000-$400,000 in accumulated reserves as the organization deals with this new financial paradigm.

Action Plans

The USOC indicated three areas of concerns: USATT’s Board, international results, and our high performance plan.

Due to the pending results of 6 members (2 officers, 2 at-large vice presidents and 2 athlete representatives) of the 13-member Board, I decided to focus my first efforts on a revamping of our Elite Athlete Committee. Long-time Committee Chair Bob Fox indicated that he would prefer to help a new leader transition into the post. I consulted with the committee and we agreed that Ross Brown would be named initially as co-chair. I thank Todd Sweeris for his previous service in that post. Ross is being confirmed as this issue goes to print. Expect to see revised and plans for USATT’s high performance in the near future.

I also informed ITTF President Adham Sharara of this news. On behalf of the ITTF, he reiterated his offer to work with USATT in the areas of marketing, elite athlete development, and re-introduction of the ITTF Pro Tour (along with a profitable marketing strategy for USATT). USATT will continue to inform you, our members, of our action plans to address this matter. If you have constructive recommendations on this matter, please contact Doru Gheorghe at ed@usatt.org.

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By Olga & Stan Kahan, USATT Senior Committee Co-Chairs 949-830-6699 (ph) · 949-240-7157 (fax) chanasura@iworld.net

"THE POWER OF THE DREAM" was a wonderful theme for the 20th Anniversary of the Huntsman World Sr. Games in Southern Utah last October. Among 5,000 participants in 22 sports, table tennis players joined together in competing, socializing and promoting this wonderful sport. Among the 200 table tennis players there were avid competitors from nine countries and the United States. A group of players from Germany excelled in winning gold and silver medals. Gold winners — men and women — also came from Canada, England, Spain and Sweden. They spread the delightful news to their colleagues and fans in their own countries and in other corners of the globe, even distant Mongolia. Shulutin Otgonbaatar, the 54-year-old athlete from Ulaannbaatar (the capital of Mongolia), five-time national champion during his younger years, added another medal to his "Star Collection" in St. George, Utah.

Only one major problem developed when "lost and found" could not find one gentleman’s missing teeth. It was left at one of the tables, and the Huntsman staff searched for the tooth fairy for several days without success. Fortunately, there was soft food available when needed.

80-year-old (on Nov. 17) Byng Forsberg of Lode, California, in addition to his gold medal in the Huntsman World Seniors, succeeded in promoting his beloved table tennis beyond the senior community. After his successful table tennis "match" against California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (the score has vanished) Byng made local, national and international news in various media, including CBS’s "The Early Morning Show." With his gold medal from the Governor, Yang promoted our sport and fitness. With his charming youthful smile he also was a special guest at the fund-raising banquet, hosted by the Mayor of New York City. It was, indeed, the actual realization of the "POWER OF THE DREAM!"

A gold medalist (October 2006), Dorothy Peterson from North Mankato, MN, started playing table tennis when she was 10 years old. Even now, in her 80’s, in the winter, this snow bird attends the Harlingen Table Tennis Club in Texas, where its members, young and old, meet two times a week.

Dorothy also hopes that Las Vegas will be a “center point” for the Continental (North American) Seniors, and other mature table tennis participants from Canada, Barbados, etc., wish it too!

The USATT Senior Committee hopes to work out the logistics of this important Senior project and to promote its execution by the end of 2007. Then the twilight zone would become a reality by help of "THE POWER OF THE DREAM!"

The USATT Senior Committee will do its best to promote an exciting new program, initiated by Larry Hodges, with regard to the new USATT team league, in which many senior players would also be able to take part. Please visit www.usatt.org/league and click on "USATT Team League" for additional information.

Just believe in life, in the "POWER OF THE DREAM," and hold on to your teeth!
An Official's View

By Wendell Dillon, IR and Chair of the Rules & Officials Committee

How many times have we heard that at tournaments throughout the country? At most tournaments umpires are provided only for the final match of the highest event. Often we can't even find an umpire if the players request one. Sometimes do better and I commend them for it, but normally we are short of umpires.

At the U.S. Open and Nationals we try to provide an umpire for each semifinal and final match for all events and for earlier rounds of the main events.

Referees and tournament directors: please use umpires when they are available. It will make matches go more quickly and more smoothly. It also is the only way we have to get experience.

We qualify 30-40 new Club Umpires each year. Very few advance to higher levels. We need to have umpires progressing through the different levels with some reaching to become International Umpires. We have 38 active IU's. Only five of them are under 50 years old. We need to develop umpires to replace my generation. This is not an attempt to impose age discrimination. It is just that we need to develop senior umpires in each generation.

International Umpires get the opportunity to travel to foreign tournaments, sometimes with financial support from USATT. National Umpires are eligible to umpire in Canadian tournaments. It is a great experience to umpire in another country. You get to see fellow umpires and top players through the world.

To advance from club umpire the steps are:

Regional Umpire – One year as a Club Umpire and completion of 25 matches, including at least five doubles matches. Exam given locally

National Umpire — One year as a Regional Umpire and completion of 25 high level matches, including at least five doubles matches. Practical, written, and oral exam; given only at the US Open or National Championships.

International Umpire – Two years as a National Umpire and recommendation by USATT. The ITTF exam is a written exam given in even numbered years, normally in the spring. To be recommended, the candidate must be an active umpire at the U.S. Open and/or Nationals after becoming a National Umpire.

Umpire Recertification. To ensure that umpires keep up to date on the rules we require that all USATT umpires recertify every three years. The current recertification exam must be completed by March 31, 2007 to remain on the active umpire list. International umpires and umpires who have passed any umpire or referee exam in 2006 are not required to recertify in this cycle. Contact Wendell Dillon at pong35@mindspring.com for how to recertify.

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Check our Tournament Blogs!
Dear Readers,

Year after year Larry Hodges is intricately and intimately involved in USATT affairs. He goes to nearly every board meeting, follows all of the political action very closely, and exchanges many private emails with our President and Board members. None of this is “bad,” per se, but hear me out.

Larry regularly comes up with various ideas for our association. Sometimes his ideas are put into action, sometimes they are not. His latest idea of a USATT league was in fact put into action. Again, this isn’t a bad thing.

Here’s where I have a problem. Larry Hodges regularly denies having political influence in the USATT. In fact, he is not supposed to be a board member because he is also the editor of our magazine. As I’m sure you all know, it’s not a good thing when the person influencing the policy is also in charge of the media. Think “Russia,” and other communist regimes.

A perfect example can be found in the previous issue (Nov/Dec). Larry Hodges claims the USATT league has met with great criticism from a variety of sources. However, all I have seen printed is Stefan Feth’s praise of the USATT league system. Nowhere in that magazine is the other point of view.

Another example is that each issue has a prepared statement from our President and Treasurer. But nowhere is any indication of all the THOUSANDS of posts criticizing our President and Treasurer.

In my opinion, Larry Hodges uses the magazine to give the readers what HE wants them to read. The readers, in turn, are clueless about many things.

Only avid readers of the About.com forum get a balanced view of what is going on. Of course, Larry often blasts this forum as being “full of misrepresentations.” But I think Larry is the one doing the misrepresentation. He is representing himself as an unbiased editor; when actually he is a VERY politically active person in our organization.

I want Larry to make a decision. Either quit being editor and run for the board; or quit acting like a board member and just be an impartial editor. A truly ethical person would choose one of these two options.

Conclusion: Folks, there is only one way to get a well-rounded and up-to-date summary of the issues; please go to the About.com Table Tennis forum and log on for yourselves. Don’t be a victim of misrepresentation. Log on today at http://tabletennis.about.com/mbboards.htm.

Let’s participate and demand transparency and accountability from our organization’s leaders.

Thank you.

Marco Borrillo, Scottsdale, Arizona

The Editor Responds...

Dear Marco,

Thank you for your letter of Nov. 8. I will try to respond to your various points in a manner that I hope will be to your satisfaction. I apologize for the length of this response, but there’s a lot to cover and I’d like to give my own “point of view” on these issues. Think of it as both a response and an informal report.

It is true as you state that I attend most board meetings and exchange emails with the USATT President and Board members. I do so as part of my job, both as editor of USA Table Tennis Magazine and as USATT Club Programs and League Director (although I am mostly in charge of the Singles League). When you work for an organization, it is important to communicate with those in charge. In this case, the USATT Board is in charge of setting policy, and I advise and execute policy in the areas I work in.

I make reports on my activities and make various proposals at nearly every Board meeting I attend. Many are online at the USATT Staff page, including various magazine reports, the Club Development Plan, the Membership Plan, and the Junior Development Plan.

I believe I keep the magazine non-political. I have no control over the officer reports, of course, but they are just that – officers giving reports. Members can judge for themselves, either with this issue or (for the super-suspicious) by browsing previous issues. And while I am disappointed to learn that the Federal Republic of Russia has fallen to Communist ©, I am equally surprised to learn I’ve turned USA Table Tennis Magazine into something like Pravda!

The example of bias you bring up is the very positive quote about the USATT League made by Stefan Feth in my interview with him last issue. I had never discussed the USATT League with him, and had no idea what his views on it were or that he would bring it up. My question to him was, “Do you have any suggestions on how to make table tennis ‘big’ in the U.S.?” Here is his response in full:

“In my opinion, a great opportunity has presented itself in the U.S. National League system. This is a way to connect players across the country and bring them under one system at all levels. For me, someone who grew up as a spectator and a player in the league system, I have first-hand experience in being a part of the successes of this type of unity. One of the most important things to help make the National League successful is to have the participation of the top players in the U.S. This would be the perfect lead by example situation where it would entice lower-level players to participate with the best of the U.S. All in all, this is an opportunity that’s been given to the public and realize that in their hands, they have the power to turn the negative criticisms of how there is no future for U.S. table tennis to make this into something big and nationwide. Wouldn’t it be awesome to be able to make a great living as a full-time player in the U.S.? So let’s say yes to the league, participate and take action!”

You then ask, “Nowhere in that magazine is the other point of view.” Was I supposed to solicit someone to criticize the USATT League, to argue that Feth is wrong, that it is not a great opportunity? Do I need to make a practice of soliciting criticism whenever someone praises a USATT program? I hope not!!

The USATT League (especially the Team League) is a potentially great opportunity to grow our sport well beyond its current status, and will have a far better chance of doing so if it is not politicized. I believe that if you or others have suggestions on improving it, and the goal is to improve the league, it would be more constructive to discuss these suggestions directly with those running it (two-way communication), rather than sending it to the magazine. Send suggestions for the Singles League to me (larry@larrylt.com), for the Team League to North American Table Tennis (awilliams@natabletennis.com). We’re learning as we go along, as no one has ever attempted to set up a nationwide table tennis league in this country.

The current model is roughly a hybrid of European table tennis leagues and tennis leagues in the U.S.

You brought up the reports by the President and Treasurer, and refer to “THOUSANDS” of posts criticizing them, as well as criticisms of the USATT League, presumably referring to postings in online forums. The huge majority of these postings you cite are from a small number of people, of which you are by far the most prolific. I have a firm policy when it comes to publishing letters or articles such as these: I don’t print anything that I do not receive. Anyone may submit letters to the editor, but of these supposed “THOUSANDS” of postings, none have been sent to me for publication. (If I now get a deluge of letters, then I’ll probably choose a representative sample, with help from the USATT Editorial Board. But let me be clear; I’m not going to allow the magazine to become another version of the politicized fighting that goes on in most online forums, and such letters will not be published.)

I see these reports by the President, Treasurer and others as a way for elected leaders (unpaid volunteers) to communicate with members. Since their contact info is listed in every issue, and on the USATT web page, anyone who wishes to discuss things with them may do so.

Regarding online forums, I believe they are often taken over by a few very loud and self-selected people, so I don’t really agree that readers of online forums get a particularly balanced view of things. I believe most with experience in such forums know what I’m talking about.

I’m not sure what you mean when you say I act “like a board member.” If it’s because I state my opinions, anyone can do that, including you. My opinions are based on my many years as a table tennis player, and as a member of the USATT, all of which I believe most with experience in All forums know. I’m not going to attempt to vote or attend closed sessions or anything else that I am not entitled to do.

So I will continue to do my job and voice my opinions until the USATT Board chooses not to renew my contract.

I appreciate your raising these questions, and hope my responses have been sufficient. I don’t agree with you that our readers are “clueless about many things”; I believe they can judge these matters on their own.

Sincerely,
Larry Hodges, larry@larrylt.com
Editor, USA Table Tennis Magazine, and USATT League & Club Programs Director
A Date with the Governor:
The Arnold Schwarzenegger – Byng Forsberg
“Challenge” Match
By Larry Hodges

Ookay, they didn’t keep score, and we’ll never know who would have won. From the winks and blinks, however, it’s obvious that Byng, a many-time medalist in various senior championships, dominated the rallies.

But do we really care about the scores? It all came about when Byng, who turned 80 on Nov. 17, received a letter asking to contribute to the Schwarzenegger re-election campaign for governor of California. Byng wrote back that he’d contribute $100 if the governor would play him a table tennis match. Arnold accepted!

The 30-minute “match” took place on Thursday, Sept. 21, at Stockton Metropolitan Airport. It was closed to the public, but reports of the match were in newspapers all over California and elsewhere.

USATT Board of Directors
Motions & Votes

Due to last-minute space considerations, the motions and votes by the USATT Board of Directors over the past two months will be in the following issue. They are online at: www.usatt.org/organization/minutes.

USATT League Watch
Sponsored by Paddle Palace and Stiga

By USATT League
Director Larry Hodges

The USATT Singles League is now FREE!!! Team leagues are now forming - join one now! Take a trip to www.usatt.org/league, explore the pages, and join - or start! - a league! (Below - stats after three years.)

Dec. 1, 2006
Active Leagues 173
Participants 5037
Matches 76,805

Corrections

In the last issue, the photo on page 29 of Laszlo “Laci” Bellak was incorrectly credited. The photographer was Mal Anderson. On the very next page, the photo of Derek Wall is also incorrectly credited; it too was by Mal Anderson. On page 28, the picture of Bellak and Tim Boggan was credited to Boggan; it should not have been credited.

The fictional table tennis story “Thrown For a Loop” by Daniel Guttman was left out of the table of contents last issue, so readers might want to go back and see that (pages 56-57). Please ignore several (yikes!) typos that snuck in.

More Talk About Improving Umpiring . . .
By Mal Anderson, ITTF International Referee, USATT Hall of Fame Member, former Secretary of the ITTF Rules Committee

In the September/October issue both Tim Boggan and Jack Howard presented some valid criticisms of the umpiring. However, both missed the root cause of the situation, which is that USATT does not have nearly enough umpires!

Along with Tim, I saw a senior match that was probably decided by the faults called by the umpire. The faulted player then had to remember to serve correctly every time, hurting his concentration, and was faulted again when he didn’t remember. Was this the player’s fault? Not really - he probably was never umpired by an International Umpire before. Was it the umpire’s fault? No, he was just doing his job. Our (lack of a) system is the problem!

In Europe, all tournament and league matches are umpired, and the umpires routinely fault every illegal serve. Result - the players serve legally, without having to think about it - the habit is ingrained. We don’t have that here, so our players don’t learn to habitually serve legally, as there is no penalty when they don’t. Until they come to the U.S. Open, reach a final, and there the umpire is an IU.

This extends all the way to the top. When I umpired a match of the U.S. Olympic Team and called a fault, she said, “that serve has never been called on me before.” True - and when she again goes to a World Championships or Olympic Games, she will lose points to fault calls, and her concentration will suffer because she will have to think about serving legally, not what serve to use. (Also, what people who habitually don’t toss the ball high enough, a very common problem, start throwing it up, the timing is so different they often miss their own serve.)

The answer? For our top players, read the rules, know what is needed, and practice it - by having your practice partners gleefully call fault whenever your serve is even slightly wrong. Do this even if you aren’t keeping score. Also, the USATT should provide tough umpiring at all training camps. For the rest of us - consider doing the above, in hopes of reaching a final at the Open or Closed.

We need more umpires! At least 50 times as many as we now have. Any competent player can be a good umpire - get in touch with the USATT Officials Committee and start!

They Said It...
Special “Balls of Fury” Edition

The movie opens April 6, 2007, starring Christopher Walken and Dan Fogler, as well as USATT member Adam Bobrow (Ping Pong Posse founder) as “Tiny Player.” A number of other USATT members were involved as advisors and/or extras, including Diego Schaaf, Wei Wang, Steve Kunimoto, Biba Golie, Elie Zainabadinova, Chloe Nguyen, Jason Sun, Arturo Shiu and Barney J. Reed. You can see the trailer for it at: http://movies.yahoo.com/feature/ballsoffuryqht.html

“Randy Daytona (Dan Fogler) was considered a ping-pong phenomenon until a hard fall from grace. Now Randy must bounce back to take on an undercover assignment for the government. The CIA wants Randy to enter a tournament sponsored by Feng (Christopher Walken), a ping-pong enthusiast and notorious criminal. Randy must get the goods on Feng and bring him to justice.” From fandango.com.

“Welcome to the unsanctioned, underground, and utterly unhinged world of clandestine Ping-Pong tournaments.” From imdb.com.

“A former ping-pong champ is brought in by the government to infiltrate a high-stakes underworld tournament and bring down the organizer, a feared crime boss.” From movieweb.com.

“Christopher Walken in the trailer.”


“I am constantly getting bruised, cut, and injured running through barriers at USATT tournaments, but Feng’s tournament had a little more in store for me.” Actor and USATT member/Ping Pong Posse Founder Adam Bobrow, who played “Tiny Player” in the movie.

“Ping-pong, or, as the Chinese say, ping-pong.” Christopher Walken in the trailer.

“This movie surely looks and sounds like a spoof of the 1973 Bruce Lee’s movie “Enter the Dragon,” and many video games (Mortal Kombat) that came after it, but instead of killing each other they beat each other in the game of ping-pong.” From worstpreviews.com.

“What part of sudden death didn’t you understand?” Christopher Walken in the trailer after a losing player . . . suffers the consequences.

“They got control of the movie...” Devin Faraci, about what he received cit (I...
In Memoriam: Bobby Gusikoff (1936-2006)
By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

My longtime friend Bobby Gusikoff, who I'd known for over 50 years, was the 1953 and '54 U.S. Open Junior Champion, the 1959 U.S. Open Singles and (with Sol Schiff) Doubles Champion, and (with Sharon Acton) the 1960 and '61 U.S. Open Mixed Doubles Champion. All told, he represented the U.S. at four World Championships. He also played exhibitions for the Globetrotters with four-time World Champion Richard Bergmann. From the 1960's into the early '70's Bobby owned and operated the New York City Riverside Plaza Hotel Club, a second home for some of the most famous U.S. Champions. He then went on to organize the 1977 Hollywood U.S. Open. Perhaps his most noteworthy table tennis accomplishment, though, was the "Legends" tape he put together in the mid-1990's that featured the actual tournament play of many of the Sport's greatest players, particularly the legendary hard bat players from the 1930's, '40's, and '50's. Bobby was inducted into the USTTA Hall of Fame in 1984—40 years or so before he suddenly, unexpectedly began the longest and most incredibly courageous battle of his ever-enenergetic life. Here's the opening to his "Lucky To Be Alive" remembrance:

"Call 911! Quick!" I told my wife Karen. It was 7:00 a.m., July 10, 1997. All the left side of my body had just gone totally numb and I had fallen back on the couch. A few minutes later I was in an ambulance, sirens screaming, speeding toward UCLA Medical Center. How many times had I seen such a speeding ambulance and wondered who the poor soul in it was and what was wrong with him. Now I was that poor soul and something was very wrong with me. I didn't know what it was, and I was very frightened.

A few minutes later we pulled into the Medical Center's underground parking lot, and that would be all I could remember of that morning.

My wife Karen later told me what had followed. I was rushed into surgery for an eight-and-a-half-hour operation on my brain. I'd had an aneurysm. A blood vessel had ruptured in my brain and there was considerable bleeding. The doctor told my wife and son Nick that 15 minutes more and he wouldn't even have bothered looking at me. That's how close I came to checking out.

...A deep depression set in as I began to realize what a cruel twist my life had taken and what a bleak future I now had....

I was feeling pretty sorry for myself until I started taking therapy classes and saw people much worse off than I was....

I had some things to be thankful for. I had not lost my speech and could still use my right arm and leg.

The therapy sessions could be very tough though. For example, one day I was helped to lie on the floor, then told to rise up onto a padded table with my one good arm and leg. It was almost impossible. But when I was able to do it...I started feeling a little better about myself. I'm not taking this as an excuse, but...I took heart just by looking across the street to see Mrs. Kelly. She is a 97-year-old woman who uses a walker as she takes out the garbage each day. I admire the many people with unbelievable courage and take strength from them.

Bobby did take strength from them—and two years later, in obvious decline physically, he walked to make the arduous, very tiring wheelchair journey to Vegas to receive his Lifetime Achievement Award. And if, in Awards in the past, he was still to be part of Life in the present, there was 7 years of suffering still to come.

He grew up in a family of high achievers. His mother's father, Bohumil Kryl, had played the cornet for John Philip Sousa; his mother was a very accomplished pianist; and his father was a noted violinist and symphony orchestra conductor. Bobby himself played the drums. By the time he was a freshman at New York City's Professional Children's School, he'd had "bit parts in several movies," and had "spent one year on Broadway in...Miss Liberty." He'd also been chosen as the "Star of Tomorrow" on the Tex and Jinx Falkenburg television show for his imitation of Al Jolson.

But his focus soon turned elsewhere. As he said, "I found my love." The table tennis challenges began with his early days at Herwald Lawrence's Club, where at the weekly tournaments he would play with Lawrence to pair against National Champion Dick Miles. With such a desire to beat the best, it was almost inevitable that he himself became the best—first among the Juniors, then the Men.

At the Feb., 1955 White Plains, N.Y. Eastern's, the 18-year-old Gusikoff might be said to have come of age. He won this tournament by hitting through 4-time U.S. Champion Lou Pagliaro, then the new perennial U.S. Champion Dick Miles, then the ever-dangerous defender Harry Hirschkowitz. As a result he was added to the U.S. World Team, and that year, playing in the English Open, he gave 2-time World Champion Johnny Leach a tough match.

So many tournaments, so many matches...until Bobby's U.S. #1 triumph: his 1959 U.S. Men's Singles win at the Inglewood, CA Nationals—over Norby Van de Walle, Lenny Cooperman, and Defending Champ Marty Reisman. He was "cat-quick" said the AP man who also reported his Doubles win with Sol Schiff over Cooperman and Mike Ralston. Sol enjoyed playing Doubles with Gusikoff because, he said, "Bobby took the shots I would have. He went for the point."

By now Gusikoff was at his unyielding best. Reisman says Bobby would play "3-and-Stop or 5-and-Stop" games against some of New York's best. That is, Bobby would have to score on his 3rd or 5th ball, or give up the point. A nervous, energetic, at times electric player, with a fast, all-out attack, 'he'd win point after point with his flaming, windmill forhand, or deceptive, snap-ricochetting-down-the-line backhand—and, withal, he'd somehow always have time in the midst of a furiously-fought exchange to send a balancing hand up to straighten his slipping glasses.

At the '59 Dortmund World's, in Swabyhling Cup Play, Gusikoff had a very big moment, for Captain Si Wassennan heeded his plea to play him against Hungary, which meant Bobby had the opportunity he'd hoped for—a chance to play Ferenc Sido, the 1953 World Champion, and destined at this '59 World's to be the Men's Singles runner-up. "Sido will let me lead," Gusikoff had argued. And, wow, Bobby with his snap-smack attack did lead—and produced a startling upset over one of the world's best players.

Memorable matches with USTTA Hall of Famers Reisman, Bernie Bakiet, Danny Pecora, Erwin Klein, Bobby Fields, and Jack Howard, who'd later speak at Bobby's funeral, would follow. But Gusikoff's last hurrah at the cramped Toronto CNE Fairgrounds in 1967 was
perhaps the most memorable. Though Bobby was now 31 and past his prime, there couldn’t have been another time in his whole career that he hummed ball after ball in such an overpowering way. He lost this final to the visiting Englishman Denis Neale, but (after he’d won the 1st at 13, let the 2nd get away from 20-17 up, and won the 3rd at 10), I and everyone else agreed that his furious and unrelenting assault on one of Europe’s Top 10 players, falling just short of a straight-game victory, was the best sustained attack we’d ever seen.

In the beginning of the mid-’60s, some of the happiest moments of my late 30’s and early 40’s life would be spent at Bobby’s Riverside Plaza Club. As Mal Russell’s famous painting of the many colorful characters there would testify, this Club was where it was at. Well I remember how, after I’d finished teaching my afternoon classes, I’d hurry away from school, and, coming up out of that Manhattan subway, would literally run the two blocks that remained, then dart down those Hotel-basement steps. It was also in this dark, subterranean world that my two sons began to learn not only about table tennis but about people in all their life-giving, life-loving variety.

Back in 1964, Gusikoff had won the USTTA’s Barna Award for his contributions to the Sport, but many of his accomplishments were still to come. Thirty years before he would put together his unique “Legends” video, he’d left New York for California and the Southern California Film Institute, made an appealing table tennis short, opened a Club on North Beachwood Drive in Hollywood, then put on the 1977 U.S. Open—the Program for which has become a collector’s item.

I fondly remember how Bobby wanted me, my wife, and kids to come to this Hollywood National’s he was running—Scott and Eric would play in the final of the Junior’s there—and so with his unthinking, spontaneous generosity he promised me $100 in the way of help. When I got there, I could see Bobby was making no mention of the $100, and since I assumed he was “short,” I didn’t want to ask him for it. But I myself in those days—taking Scott and Eric to tournament after tournament—was always in credit-card trouble, so soon I had to ask. And Bobby, bless him, promptly reached into his near-empty pocket and gave me the needed hundred.

Whatever Bobby’s difficulties were, he always wanted to hold to his word. Being very loyal to his friends, he was devastated when Erwin Klein, with whom he’d lived on first moving to California, was murdered. He’d testified the horrifying news into the telephone, could hardly get the words out to me—just as on brief occasions he would later in his prolonged sufferings. And once, I remember, a visitor to his N.Y. Club had cast a racial slur at one of Bobby’s regulars, the popular Jamaican player Fremium Roberts. Bobby of course could take care of himself, but Bobby was on the visitor in a flash, scurrilously haranguing him right out of the Club—and I loved him for that.

Bobby was human, had his frailties—but I’ll always remember him for his pride, his integrity, his ambition, his willingness to accept the call to action, his enthusiasm, his persistence, and above all his courage.

He once said to me, “Someday, when they’re about to close the big box on me, someone lift the lid for a split second and let me hit just one more forehand drive, and I’ll bet you $20 it goes in.” “You’re on,” I said with similar gusto.

Later, needing a helpful lift, I heard the drumbeat, saw in my imagination his last stroke, that bravura one—and, sure enough, beyond all doubt, his dancing Spirit did whip in that inimitable forehand.

So of course I only wished I could hand him the $20—I owed him a lot more than that.

In Memoriam: Graham Steenhoven (1912-2006)

By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Former USTTA President Graham Steenhoven (1968-72), for decades an important figure in Michigan table tennis—inducted into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame (1979) and the USTTA Hall of Fame (1988) —is of course best remembered for his leadership role in the historic 1971-72 “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” exchanges with the Chinese. However, he was well-known in table tennis circles long before he was inducted into the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame. In 1977, Graham received the USTTA’s Berna Award for his contributions to the Michigan Association, and under his leadership Michigan has the 3rd largest USTTA membership (110) of any state.

There was a great deal of prejudice against Jews and Blacks in the Midwest, as of course elsewhere, and Dick Miles, in winning his first U.S. Open Men’s Singles title in 1945 in Detroit, felt the crowd’s excessive applause for his opponent, and was irritated by it. Michigan TTA President Steenhoven didn’t seem to think Miles was the good sportsman he himself thought he was, for Dick remembers Graham handing him the Men’s trophy and saying, “I hope you behave like a Champion.” “These guys in the Midwest were the real ‘Americans,’ Dick said ironically. “We were the New Yorkers, the wise guys, the Jews.”

Miles and his friend Freddie Borges had been stunned and disgusted when at an earlier USTTA Open Meeting in Detroit, the question was raised whether Negroes should be allowed to play in sanctioned events. Who could believe it was mere chance that President Steenhoven’s opening match in this 1945 U.S. Open paired him against the only black man in the field, Lynel Overton. It was, I hope, a welcomed gesture.

Gambling on matches was a big bugaboo for the USTTA. Marty Reisman’s famous and surely exaggerated story in his Money Player has him making an innocent mistake. He went
In Memoriam: Ulpiano Santo (1908-2006) By Dean Johnson

Ulpiano Santo, perhaps the oldest active athlete in America, died on October 27 at his home in Chesapeake, Virginia. "Mr. Santo," as he was respectfully referred to by his fellow table tennis players at the Kempsville Recreation Center in Virginia Beach, was 98. He was the club’s patron saint of ping-pong.

Born in 1908 in Leyte, Philippines, Santo played table tennis as a hobby until he retired from the Navy in 1956. Following his retirement, he began playing tournaments. He won 11 national titles and competed in senior tournaments all over the world, well into his 90s, until he started losing to the “young guys” in the 80s events.

Two nights a week he would drive from his home in Chesapeake to the Rec Center in Virginia Beach and wait patiently to challenge a table. His returns and footwork were not quite what they used to be. He would stand in one spot and make his younger opponents do the running.

Last April, just before his 98th birthday, Jim Washington, a reporter for the Virginian Pilot, stopped by to talk to him about his table tennis career and how he’s able to hold up against much younger opponents. Here’s some of what Mr. Washington reported in a major feature he did on Santo for his newspaper:

“I don’t overdo it,” he said, taking a seat. “When I get tired, I stop.” Usually after his games he liked to retire for some checkers with friends. “It keeps you away from doing something bad.”

Santo, as usual, is agreeable. “I’m a good Joe,” he concurred. “I’m a simple guy. You play with everybody, you talk to everybody. We’re all friends.”

Mr. Santo will be sorely missed at the club by all who knew him and loved him.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2007
In Memoriam: Frank Dwelly (1923-2006)

By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Few players can claim to have played tournament table tennis as long and as well as Frank Dwelly. Or to be as revered as he was, for no sooner had he died than I began to get phone calls and e-mails telling me the sad news. It’s not surprising that he who was such a competitor would be playing—and winning—at his longtime Waltham Club...just before going home to have, finally, that great heart “give.”

That Frank did have, in another sense of the word, a giving heart was known to many, not just to his friends and particularly to his daughter Lois whom I met on a day when she and Frank—he must have been 80 then—had been walking for hours together around Las Vegas. (This while he was competing in the Closed. Which suggests what great shape he was in for a man his age—he rowed, played tennis, walked the treadmill and, without a cart, the golf course.)

Many in the larger table tennis community recall a legendary act of giving on Frank’s part, for it was linked to his sportsmanship, and why he was a class act. At the 1970 Detroit U.S. Open, 4-time Champ Erwin Klein, arriving late from L.A. after being repeatedly sick on the plane, comes shakily into the 16ths where he was named the tournament’s “Outstanding Player.” Although Frank played competitively all his life, especially at his venerable Waltham Club, and won innumerable New England Singles with a win over Indiana’s Harry Deschamps.

In the 1980’s he scored his first Major Doubles titles—both of them with his friend Benny (the Over 40’s at the ’86 U.S. Closed and the Over 50’s at the ’88 U.S. Closed.) Sandwiched in between was his runner-up finish to George Brathwaite in the U.S. Open over 50’s. After Frank closed out the millennium with a win over George Hendry. and a ’99 U.S. 75 Championship, he entered the last and in some ways most accomplished half-dozen years of his extraordinarily long playing career.

In 1999 through 2005 U.S. Open/Closed competition, Frank achieved much. He won both a U.S. Open (2001) and a U.S. Open (2003) Over 70’s Singles (this last at age 80). He won (with Tim Boggan) six Over 70 Doubles Championships. He was five times a 75 Finalist. And in 2005 an 80’s Champion (balancing out a 20 years earlier), over Hall of Famer Nicklallas. He told me I was the fastest voluntering at a senior center preparing Meals on Wheels for the less fortunate. Frank was a down-to-earth, uppretentious guy who’d worn a Venetian gondola ride, so at Bremen he

But after he’d come back from WW II—he’d been a member of the famous 4th Marine Division—he immediately won the Greater Boston Closed, and for the 1948-49 season he was U.S. #12. In 1956, at the Eastern’s he lost a gutsy -24, -12, 19, -19 match to former U.S. Open Champion Johnny Somacl, and in 1957 was named 1st Alternate on the U.S. Men’s Team to the Toronto CNE Championships.

Through the 1960’s and into the ’70’s, his limited tournament play hadn’t allowed him to win a Major title. He’d come close, though. In 1970 as a U.S. Open Over 40 Finalist to 9-time Canadian Men’s Champion Max Marinko. And in ’72 as a U.S. Open Over 40 Doubles Finalist with lifelong friend and Doubles partner Benny Hull (they beat Schiff/Bellak before losing to Bukiet/Bill Meszaros). Finally in 1976, through he’d lose the 40 Doubles final with Benny, Frank would win his first Major—the U.S. Open 50 Singles with a win over Indiana’s Harry Deschamps.

And he wasn’t close-minded or, tattooed as he was, afraid to be thought “different.” Indeed, he startled many an opponent by suddenly switching hands to continue an attack—probably had to be considered the best ambidextrous player of anyone near him in age (a righty, he played left-handed). Also catching one’s attention was the innovative suction-cup extension at the end of his racket with which he picked up the ever-stroiling ball.

Ten years ago Frank had artificial hips put in. “The doctor that operated on me,” he said, “is also the doctor who operated on Jack Nicklaus. He told me I was the fastest recuperating patient for a man my age he ever had.” It’s easy to imagine that Frank couldn’t wait to be mobile—that he had to continue going out to embrace all the variety that life had to offer. And that meant more giving too—volunteering at a senior center preparing Meals on Wheels for the less fortunate. Frank was a down-to-earth, unpretentious guy who’d worn on court, as a spectator once said, “basketball shoes that looked as old as the fellow wearing them.” But he was always a serious player, and, as I well know, a thoughtful strategist and never a criticizing or complaining Doubles partner. We got on very well together, on court and off, and I will miss him.

Explore Over 300 Tips of the Week at www.usatt.org - every Monday since Dec., 1999!

Tip of the Month: January

Mid-Level Doubles 101 By Carl Danner

Here are some fundamentals for the kind of doubles you will play in ratings doubles events.

1. Find a partner whose game naturally complements yours. By this I mean something very specific: That the returns his game naturally encourages (from opponents) are the ones you want, and vice versa.

2. Also, look for a partner who is emotionally compatible with you. By this I especially mean that he can handle your temper while you are tempering yours.

3. Steadiness is worth a lot. At mid levels, many teams make lots of errors. Keeping the ball in play, while moving it around the court, will win you many points.

Tip of the Month: February

Block Versus Stroke By Carl Danner

Almost always, you are better off stroking a return rather than simply blocking the ball. This is especially true on the forehand side. But many players instinctively block because it feels safer.

To correct this tendency, have your practice partner feed you the balls you usually block. Start the practice rallies with a block, and then gradually take longer and longer backswings as you transition from a block to a full-fledged stroke.

Eventually, you will learn to trust your ability to take a backswing and still meet the ball in the right place, giving it a boost of power that a block could not.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2007
YOUR SERVICE GAME
Number of Service Options
Having a reasonable arsenal of serves is important. You don’t need ten tricky serves, but you do need at least one good short serve and one good long serve (although this isn’t as important at the higher levels). Being able to vary the spin and placement on these two options alone will give you a very respectable service game.

Two-Bounce Serve
The first serve to learn is the short, low “two bounce” serve. “Two bounce” refers to a serve that would bounce twice before passing the end-line on your opponent’s side of the table if given the chance. This serve is important because it is virtually impossible to loop since you can’t come at the ball from below (due to the table). At higher levels, it is generally best if the second bounce is within six inches of the end line—closer is better. Having the second bounce near the end has several benefits. The receiver will be making his return from farther away. The extra distance makes drop shots, short pushes, and other touch shots more difficult, which means that your partner will have a better chance to attack the return. Also, the extra distance gives your partner a split second more time to get into position. Lastly, when the ball gets really close to the end-line, your opponent must make a decision about whether or not it will clear the end-line. If he guesses that it will, and it doesn’t, he’ll likely make a weak off-balance push. If your serves hit close to the end-line with regularity, your opponent will tend to expect it, and will be less likely to pounce on and loop the occasional long ball.

Two-Bounce Serve Spin (Sidespin not included)
Backspin is the most common, and generally the most useful spin for use against intermediate and lower level players. Varying the amount of backspin is important—disguising what you are doing is awesome (I can dream!). Flat (no spin) serves are also very useful—especially when disguised or against long pips or anti rubber. The topspin variation is a bit more difficult to master, but is very useful as many players simply aren’t used to it and tend to push it, popping it up. After you have developed a reliable two-bounce serve, work to add variations and disguise your serves a little at a time. While variety is nice, you need at least one really solid, reliable option. Even while working on new serves and variations, make sure you practice your established serves enough to stay sharp.

Very Short Backspin Serve
Although usually not problematic for high-level players, many lower and intermediate level players struggle to do anything with very short, low, heavy serves. If you can vary the spin without being obvious, you’ll likely get a fair number of netted returns and pop-ups. Better players, annoyingly, tend to drop these serves just over the net, which will put the pressure on your partner.

Long Serves
Long serves are fast, low serves where the first bounce on your opponent’s side is within six inches of the end line. The faster and deeper you can make these, the better. At lower levels, this serve can win points outright. At mid-levels, it should be used more sparingly, and disguised more. At high levels, you better pick your spots carefully and be very sneaky.

The classic and fastest long serve is with topspin. The topspin will pull the ball down, allowing more speed. The down side is that topspin serves, if read correctly, can be ripped mercilessly.

Like with short serves, a bit of variation and disguise is very useful. Really fast backspin serves are pretty much impossible, but medium fast ones are very effective against many—like me. They are just fast enough to reduce the reaction and thinking time of your opponent. If they reflexively rip at it like it had topspin, they’ll net it.

Flat serves are also a nice option. They can be served faster than backspin, but still require your opponent to make a quick accurate read.

Sidespin Serves
Very briefly, sidespin is almost always a good thing—unless you are serving to a long pips player. It is just one more thing your opponent has to consider and deal with. With a forehand pendulum serve, some degree of left sidespin is pretty much built-in. Right sidespin is more difficult to accomplish with a forehand serve. At lower levels, top sidespin serves mixed with bottom sidespin serves can result in some entertaining return failures. Nothing makes me happier than when I have to leap left and reach up to catch the return!

PARTNER
Playing Hand
If your partner is left-handed (and you a righty) you will have the luxury of using forehand pendulum serves without blocking his vision. This is a nice advantage for most people. Also, he will be able to see your ball contact, so should get a good read on your spin. Service signals are not as important—unless you or your partner have very well disguised serves. This also holds true when your partner is serving.

If your partner is right-handed, some accommodations will have to be made. Unless you both have viable backhand serves, service signals are critical. If either of you forehand serves, not only will you block your partner’s serve, but you’ll also have to move more quickly to get out of his way while avoiding blocking his view. This can be done, but adds a level of difficulty.

Strengths/Preferences
In general, if your partner is a good blocker, counterdriver, counterlooper, or chopper, long serves can be considered. If they are weak over the table (flipping and/or pushing), long serves may even be preferable. (This probably doesn’t hold true for 2000+ level players, but they should already know all this and more!) If your partner has a short game, short serves are the ticket. Two-bounce serves are difficult to attack. If your opponents are primarily pushers, keep everything short and primarily backspin, then let your partner set you up. Feel free to throw in some topspins or flat serves occasionally—even short game experts like to kill a ball now and then.

If your partner is versatile (bless him!) you are free to be creative. Your partner’s specialties should be considered. For example, if he has a weak short game, avoid short serves. If your partner has some glaring weakness, you should take them into consideration. An example would be to avoid long serves if your partner is a shaky blocker. Another obvious one would be not serving heavy sidespin if your partner handles returns off these poorly (especially against long pips).

Special Case #1 – Long Pip Partner
Spin the heck out of the ball, and then pay attention. Your opponent’s partner should have his hands full. If he gets it back, you will be glad you paid attention. With practice, you’ll get used to this—I hope to....

Special Case #2 – Long Pip Opponent
Unless your partner is really good, avoid sidespin serves like the plague when serving to an opponent with long pips. Trust me. In general, long, flat serves are safest. Long pips players have few options here, and generally have to chop, bat, or roll these back—all of which are basically flat.

Slightly Advanced Options
If your partner is fairly comfortable against long pips, top and backspin serves are fair game. Service signals are critical! Medium backspin serves will generally get medium topspin back, which, if anticipated, can be ripped. If your partner likes to loop underspin, serve up medium topspin and let him go to town.
OPPONENT
Playing Hand

Left-handed opponents are tough. They have the ability to simply step forward a bit to reach ANY possible short serve with ease. This is significant. If you are playing a lefty with a stiff wrist, you can usually keep them from going hard crosscourt, and sometimes even crosscourt at all. Heavy left-spin two-bounce serves will usually keep their return to the left (your vantage point) side or center of the table. If they have a limber wrist, they won’t be as constrained. If they REALLY cheat to the right, you might be able to sneak a fast serve down the middle. If you set it up with a few extra-wide and short serves, you have a better chance. If you do this and your partner eats it, either do it again immediately (hoping that your opponent will know that nobody would be dumb enough to try it twice in a row), then forget it, or just forget it entirely. Partners have been known to get miffed when they get to eat two in a row....

If your opponent is a right-handed, basically serve the way you don’t want to be served. If they return with their forehand, short, wide serves are generally difficult to handle. Once they get comfortable stepping in, a topspin, left-spin serve down the line will “brush them back.” If they casually rip this serve, you better be wary. If your opponent can rip the above-mentioned ball and flip wide with a vengeance, medium long, knuckle busters to the middle are probably your best bet. This decreases both the angle he has to work with and his margin of error.

Strengths/Preferences

In general, if your opponent is a powerful looper, long serves are not your friend.

If he is a strong lifter and pusher, but not too intimidating on loops, long serves may be a good idea (depends on your partner).

Sometimes the best you can do is to keep him from ripping the ball. If his short and long games are both strong, you need to attack whichever your partner is most comfortable with.

Weakness

If your opponent has some glaring weakness, you should obviously take advantage of them. Most of these are obvious, but look for more subtle things as well. For example, if they ALWAYS rip or push to the same spot, point this out to your partner and save him some steps. Another rule is to throw in a fast serve to see how they react. Some otherwise solid players struggle with these.

Special Case #3 - Short Pip Opponent – Especially Penholders

Many of the best serve returners I’ve run into are pipes-out penholders. They have an uncanny ability to full any “slightly high” serve. What makes them even more of a threat is that their attacks against backspin serves have much heavier topspin than their normal shots. They are very good against short serves, but can be erratic against deep serves because they can’t generate as much topspin as an inverted player. Yet a deep serve allows them to attack, so while you may mix them in, you should favor short no-spin and backspin serves, ideally with the second bounce right around the endline. Short sidespin and topspin serves are good variations, but pipes-out players often attack them very aggressively.

It’s a good idea to discuss the variations with your partner before a match. Find out what he is or isn’t comfortable with, what serves he has that match your game, and what he knows about your upcoming opponents. Pick the right service strategy, and you’ll likely come out a winner!

Basics Corner: Side to Side Footwork

Side to side footwork is the most used footwork, being fast and economical, enabling the player to be in the best possible position for every stroke.

Photo 1: The player prepares for the forehand with the shoulders rotated to the right and the weight on the right leg. The racket is knee height and closed.

Photo 2: Contact is made from the right side at hip height as the shoulders open up.

Photo 3: At the conclusion of the stroke, the weight has been transferred onto the left leg.

Photo 4: The movement to the left is initiated by pushing off with the right leg. The left leg moves into position with a short step, with the right leg following into position. Shoulders are rotated to the right with weight on the right leg.

Photo 5: Contact is made from the backhand corner at hip height as the shoulders open up.

Photo 6: The weight is transferred to the left leg at the conclusion of the stroke.

Photo 7: The movement to the right is initiated by pushing off with the left leg. The right leg moves into position with a short step, with the left leg following to complete the forehand stroke.

Text & photos from ITTF
Level 1 Coaching Manual
Courtesy of ITTF
Author: Glenn Tepper,
ITTF Development Manager
Those interested in this manual should go to www.ittf.com
Promoting Your Club and Club Programs

Junior Programs, Beginning Classes, Leagues

By Larry Hodges

Before you can promote a club, you need to have something to sell. It could be just a place where people play table tennis. However, let's think bigger!

A club without a coach, a junior program, classes for beginners, and a league does not meet the needs of many of its potential members, and would be hard-pressed in getting new members. Not all clubs can have all of these programs, but the more you have, the more you address the needs of your current and potential players. A club that relies on walk-ins coming into a club, calling "winners," getting killed by an experienced player, and still showing up again, will have difficulty getting new players. In any successful sport, there are programs offered for new and continuing players.

Any USATT club that aspires to "greatness" (or at least "goodness") should have, at the least, a Junior Program, a Beginning Class (and perhaps private coaching) and Leagues. USATT has manuals to help out with these, which are all online at www.usatt.org/club_programs, or available from USATT (info@usatt.org). They are:
- Junior Table Tennis Training Primer
- Beginning Table Tennis Class Primer
- Professional Table Tennis Coaches Primer
- Instructor's Guide to Table Tennis

I also strongly recommend the ITTF's Level 1 Coaching Manual, which really covers techniques right up to the advanced intermediate level and is excellent for coaches. It is available at www.ittf.com (click on "Publications," then on "Order Form." )

To run the Junior Program and the Beginning Class, and for Private Coaching, your club should have a coach. For information about coaches in your area, or on becoming a coach yourself, see the online listing of coaches at www.usatt.org.

Junior Programs

Your club's coach should run at least a weekly junior training session. The most important things required to get junior players into your club are:

1. Have a junior program. New junior players will rarely join a club if they have to call winners on a table where they get killed, and where most club members avoid them because of their age and because they are beginners. They will come to your club to join others their age in junior training or junior leagues.

2. Promote the program. No one will come to your program if they don't know about it.

3. Reach critical mass. Once you have a core group of perhaps 15 or more regulars, then the program becomes almost self-perpetuating because new junior players who come to your club are more likely to join the program when they see others their age.

I need to warn against one seemingly common-sense idea. Trying to build a junior program up gradually is the cause for more failed junior programs than just about anything else. The problems with growing gradually is that you start with too few juniors, and so have difficulty recruiting new players or keeping current ones, and so lose them as fast or faster than you gain them. To avoid this pitfall, when you start your junior program promote it all-out, using all the methods outlined below at the same time. You need to get to "critical mass" right from the start.

Beginning Classes and Private Coaching

Probably the biggest difficulty in promoting table tennis is the huge disparity between a beginning player and someone with just a little serious training. The purpose of a beginning class is to give beginning players this training so they won't be lost in a club environment. Even more importantly, if you get together 12-20 people at once for a class, these players become their own "peer" group, and continue to play for the social interaction, leading to larger membership. A beginning class and private coaching are ways to bridge the huge gap between the typical "basement" player and a potential club player.

Leagues

Leagues for all levels address the needs of players at all levels. A beginning league allows beginners to come in at the same time and play other players their level. When a new player comes in, instead of telling him to "call winners" against a more experienced player, you refer him to the beginning league, and he knows what days and times to come in. Intermediate and advanced leagues address players at those levels and so they keep coming back. Clubs can take part in the USATT League (www.usatt.org/league). Teams or Singles.

Spurring Participation in Your Programs

There are four fundamental parts to the success of any table tennis program. They are:

1. Show the sport to the masses. (Show)
2. Get them to Play at your club. (Play)
3. Get them to join your club and USATT. (USATT)
4. Get them to Rejoin. (Rejoin)

What this means is that for each program you set up, you need to find a way to let the masses know about the program; get them to come to your club and play; get them to join your club and its programs, as well as USATT (if they are serious players!); and get them to rejoin. If you do three of these successfully, then the program will not be very successful. You must do all four.

Getting Players For Your Programs

Before you start on these you should put together a flyer about whatever programs you are promoting, and a press release. You should also create a web page with info on your club and its programs. Make sure USATT links to your web site from their club listing (www.usatt.org/clubs).

- Do a mailing to all current and past USATT members in your area. The USATT can sell you mailing labels at $.03/each. They can send you labels for an entire state, or by zip code, for current or past USATT members, by age (for junior programs, for example), and numerous other ways. Contact the USTTA at ratings@usatt.org or call 719-866-4583 for further information on ordering labels.

- Get on the Weekly calendar section of your local newspaper. Send a short flyer about your club and its programs to the paper, addressed to Weekly Calendar Section, or call first to see where to send it. Most newspapers will include you. It's free!

- Advertise! Place small ads in local newspapers. If you advertise in local Asian newspapers, you will get great results.

- Give copies of the class flyer to all local club members to give out to relatives or friends. Family members of current club members are a treasure trove of new players, especially junior players. Make sure to give a copy of the flyer to any new player who comes to your club.

- Run tournaments. It spurs activity and gets new members. It also gives you material for press releases to send to newspapers.

- Get a table tennis robot. It draws new players. How do you go about getting table tennis covered in the local media (in addition to the calendar section listed above)?

1. Set up local events - 1-iii a tournament or schedule a challenge match between the top two players in the state, for example. Or perhaps a team match between two adjacent states.

2. Go through the yellow pages or search online, and write down the name, email and phone number of all local media - newspapers, magazines, TV and radio.

3. Email or call each one, and ask for contact info for their Sports Department.
Promoting Table Tennis...Promoting Table Tennis...Promoting Table Tennis...

4. Email or fax press releases to all sports departments. You should do at least three different press releases: one at least a week in advance, the second 2-3 days nights before, and the third immediately after the event takes place. For weekly papers, find out when the deadline for each issue is, and send out releases accordingly.

5. Call the day after sending the press release to make sure the right person got the press release and to check if there will be coverage, or if you can send in results. Often they will say, “What press release?” and say they didn’t get it. That’s your chance to ask if you can send it again to whoever you are speaking with (or whoever they turn you over to), and you now have a contact person there.

6. Keep careful records of your press contacts. Getting that first article or broadcast is the hardest step – after that, it gets easier as they now know you and know that you are serious.

- Throw bottles out to sea with your flyers.

For Junior Programs

(in addition to the above)

- Distribute flyers at Asian schools. Look them up in the phone book, or ask local Asian players about them. (They usually meet at local schools on weekends.) Then mail, fax or email the flyer to them. If you call up the school leaders and tell them about your table tennis program, they will probably send students your way. The Asian community (especially Chinese) is the easiest group to reach if you live near any large city, and can be the foundation of your program – or at least get your program to “critical mass.” (This is the same theory used in martial arts in the U.S.) This is probably the single most successful way of getting new junior players.

- Distribute flyers at local schools. Offer to teach a class during their PE classes, or do exhibitions. Then you can talk about your program, perhaps offering free introductory lessons or classes.

- Put up your flyer in every local Rec Center, YMCA, and Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs that has tables. Look them up in the phone book, and call to find out if they have tables. It might be a good idea to create a flyer with tear-off phone numbers at the bottom. You might also ask if you can teach a class at the facility, and get them to promote it for you.

Has your club got a coach? A junior program? A beginning class? A league? Are you thinking big yet? If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at larry@larrytt.com.

Promoting Local Tournaments

By Michael Wetzel

If you attend or direct a sanctioned tournament, chances are you’re at one of the 1-2 star variety. These tournaments usually attract the same number of participants, year in and year out. But just because the tournament is small and scale doesn’t mean it can’t be rich in quality and tradition.

Regardless of the size, your top-rated players come in with plenty of accolades beside their names, i.e. current state champion; former junior team member of his/her native country; formerly top 50 in the nation; or even the tournament defending champion. And some players, regardless of skill level, travel great distances to attend the event.

These are easy, built-in hooks to promote your tournament. In preparing a short and precise press release or public service announcement about your event, you might want to lead with your star player or number of players attending.

Local newspapers and radio stations usually will publish a short announcement about the tournament at no cost. Look in the telephone book or search the Internet for contact people at your local media outlets.

Here’s a made-up press release example:

For immediate release:
North Alabama Table Tennis Championships
Four-time Alabama singles champion Adam Brown of Birmingham will be among the 48 players competing for the $200 first-place check in the North Alabama Table Tennis Championship on Jan. 15.

Brown is expected to draw stiff competition from former USA World Team member Todd Sweeris of Maryland and 10-time Tennessee champ Larry Thoman. Players from six states are expected to compete in the tournament at the Huntsville Civic Center.

The USATT-sanctioned tournament offers more than $500 in prize money and 15 trophies. The North Alabama Table Tennis Club and the city of Huntsville Parks and Recreation Department are the tournament hosts.

For more information, contact Michael Wetzel at 555-5555 or email him at mikepong@yahoo.com.

Be sure to spell correctly and have another person proofread the release before distributing it. Typos and poorly structured sentences are a bad first impression to make upon the media.

While there is no magic formula for promoting your tournament, here are some simple suggestions to help get the community involved:

- Invite a local dignitary or celebrity – the mayor, councilman, a retired pro athlete, local high school star quarterback, etc. – to hand out the awards.

- List the tournament as a charity fundraiser with a portion of the proceeds going to a local agency. That agency will help promote your event through its newsletter, mailings, etc.

- But most of all, remember the reason the tournament is being conducted. Even if it is a club fundraiser, be sure you promote the Olympic sport of table tennis in your message.

Without the players, there would be no tournament.

It is tempting to run an open event and take all entrants and their entry fees to pad the club’s coffers. However, when the number of tables and tournament staff can’t sufficiently handle the volume of players, the tournament tends to be ragged and run late.

Nobody wants to drive for hours to a poorly directed tournament that runs into the late evening. Most likely, your club’s next event will have difficulty attracting many players.

It is much wiser to limit your number of entrants. Remember to show the same respect to all players regardless of rating. Keep the entry fees affordable and tables busy.

Have a club member with marketing skills help obtain sponsors who can offer door prizes to the players. Put happy players back in their cars at an earlier hour, and they will be looking forward to your next event.

Those players’ word of mouth will promote your tournament for you.

And don’t forget to study the USATT tournament guide. The book does a comprehensive job of addressing tournament operation issues, especially time management involving number of tables versus number of entrants and events. Longtime tournament player/director/offical/umpire Wendell Dillon has compiled a wealth of information in the guide.

Promoting College Table Tennis

By John McInerney

With the half-way point in the 2006-2007 NCTTA season rapidly approaching, college table tennis programs around the country are gearing-up for a mid-season shootout while preparing for next semester’s action, both home and away.

Like any other developmental athletic program, college table tennis is a work in progress at most universities across the nation.

The application process for starting a college club, like any course of study, requires nothing more than self-discipline, diligence, and hard work. Some students shun away from the idea of developing a club once they come to realize the number of steps involved in creating a club, but

not all of them. A club constitution needs to be drafted, a faculty advisor must be selected, and 12 or more first-time members must be committed to the club’s development prior to being established. But the real key to the success of any competitive college club is marketing. Not only is marketing the key to success in college table tennis, it is essential to further developing the entire sport, both domestically and abroad.

Just last semester the University of Central Florida stocked six-packs of table tennis balls in their bookstore with their logo stamped on each one ... and the balls sold like news stories hot off the press.

Rockstar Games, who sponsored and attended the 2006 NCTTA National
Promoting Table Tennis in Schools

By Jim Scott

This article assumes we are targeting many of the high schools, middle, and elementary schools in metro areas with from 10 to 200 schools. Portland, Oregon has 200 such schools so we can be used as the example.

Portland Table Tennis Club (PTTC) has partnered with 100 schools in our metro area over 18 years. Some of them are no longer active. Every year we meld in about 6-8 new schools or ones we once had. We lose about 3-4 each year, at least until we get them back. It depends on the students, their mentors, and us. Currently we have a 17-team high school league, 12 middle schools, and 7 elementary schools. This gives us a great base to work from since many kids who already play somewhere would love to have a team which competes with other school teams. The boys’ teams each have 6-8 players and the girls have 4-6. The four teams with the most wins from September to April make the semis with the semi winners playing a team final for the perpetual trophies.

THE WHOLE OBJECT IS TO FORM TABLE TENNIS CLUBS AT ALL OF THE SCHOOLS – AFTER SCHOOL! KEEP FOCUSED ON THAT! These clubs are open to any students from the school. The clubs are designed for recreational play but also to draw players who wish to become good enough to be selected for the team, boys’ or girls’. This accomplishes two major goals of most educational and sports charitable foundations: prevention and excellence. Prevention by giving at-risk kids something to do after school while their parents are still at work, and excellence by allowing them practice and training time as well as organized teams to compete against.

If you have no programs going now and you want to, how do you start, and what’s next?

1. Call all of your area schools personally and find out how many tables they have and who you should speak to at each school.
2. If they have any tables, ask if they would like to have an organized activity one or more days a week after school.
3. Ask them if they may do an exhibition or near their cafeteria. If so, do the exhibition and hit balls with as many kids as possible during each lunch period and sign up everyone you hit with.
4. Come to their first couple of sessions and demonstrate the basic techniques of service as well as the three basic offensive and defensive strokes...drive, smash, loop...push, chop, block.
5. Help them to obtain affordable tables, paddles, and nets. It may take club funds, ear washes, other fund raisers, or donations.
6. Move on to the next school.
7. Form a league.
8. Offer a giant tournament at the end of the season (May) allowing all of the club members at the schools to participate. We call our tournament THE BIG WHACK.
9. Repeat the next year with the same schools and add to it.
10. Create some USATT tournaments primarily for the kids. Sponsor the USATT memberships for one year.
11. Sponsor a two-day clinic for your “Top 12” All-stars at season’s end. Sean O’Neill will be conducting our All-star clinic this year.

Facebook.com is yet another user-friendly, interactive website. Created by college students, Facebook is an online community for students to connect on various levels of similar interests. It has provided students with the opportunity to get to know the sport itself a little bit better, with focus groups that concentrate on discussing table tennis related topics.

The next generation of table tennis players promises to be increasingly inventive, because the ever-changing world that we live in today demands that of them. The formative environment in which college players have learned the game requires a multitude of resources for continuing the game’s progress, and ensuring its future. Not only have these students already begun to tackle the existing opportunities presented to them, they are creating new ones to meet the demands of a right here, right now information-ready world.

If you are still stumped, or want to find out more about how you or someone you know can get involved, contact the NCTTA at info@netta.org for more information.

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2) Auto-mode (feeds irregular, left and right)  
3) Self-mode (programmed by user)  
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“...Although victorious, the California women were not too happy about the way they were treated this tournament. First, on Saturday, they sat around, waited, waited, didn't play from 4:30 in the afternoon till almost 10:00 at night, then had to begin a tie at 1:00 in the morning! That’s just unconscionable on the part of Detroit officials. Then, on Sunday, the women had to play their final while the men’s final was going on. And, worse, they had no Arena set up for them—just rolled-over tables forming a barrier of sorts from the gradually-emptying-out-Cobo-Hall crowd on the other. D-J [Lee] side of things....”
—History of U.S. Table Tennis, Vol. IV

That was the U.S. Open Team Championships Thanksgiving weekend 36 years ago.

But, ah, the North American T.T. Team Championships this Thanksgiving weekend, 2006. Unlike that anti-feminine one from our History, this one draws thanks not only from the participating women, but from all those attending—players and spectators alike.

Yes, the Sport’s a mite different from what it was. Comes a visitor in 2006 from the space-time continuum of the 1960’s to watch play on the 144 Stiga Expert tables at the Baltimore Convention Center, and what does he see? A record 216 teams (875 players) providing a field of heretofore unrealized depth for Tournament President Richard Lee, Director Fong Hsu, and Richard’s wife Wendy Troy who’ll soon be registering a future addition to the Tom Nguyen/Palmar/Lee/Troy Staff (“Yes, the baby’s going to be a boy”)—the final 20 of these teams contending for the Championship being given the Taratex red-carpet treatment from Gerflor.

And what’s this? Asian Men playing—playing hard—against Asian Women! Not long ago that was a cultural no-no. Listening to NATT Media/Marketing-man Alan Williams pronouncing so conscientiously those Chinese names that give no hint of gender, this visitor from the ‘60’s must think he’s in a time warp. Of course Alan is also responsible for interfacing with such sponsors—such divergent sponsors unheard of in decades past—as Dave Sakai’s Senoda Printing, State Mortgage, and Phillips Seafood. Optimum Sync this visitor may buy at Mitch Rothleisch’s Stiga Pioneers booth, but in sync himself with what’s happening in today’s Game he sure isn’t—“I never lost to a woman in my life,” he says.

Preliminary Play

But, alright, our visitor will catch on, catch up. And so will we—for I begin coverage of the teams contending for the Championship with Friday’s Preliminary upsets.
In Group 8, the top seed, Killerspin Tech, didn't show enough "killer" spin or winning technique. Ben Johnson (who's been coaching at Attila Malek's Power Pong Academy), Keith Alban (who'd like to be out West too, live in San Francisco), and Freddie Gabriel (winner of last year's Swaythling Club Sportsmanship Award who says he plays now "for fun"—when didn't he?) shared individual one-match wins, but could do no more against an under-rated, advancing Mexico.

In Group 11, Left Right, Left Right more 5-4 rag-tag staggered than marched by the Attache Ta Tuk Canadian team, then lined up smartly, as by Dickie whose grip, game, and general appearance didn't resemble hers in the least.

The winning Sparring team—they train together at the Canadian Ottawa Center—consisted of Samson Dubina from the U.S.; Olivier Riesort originally from France but now at 20 about to become a Canadian citizen; and Joji Yamazaki who comes from Niigata, a four-hour drive northwest from Tokyo. Knockdown punches that saw these Ottawa "outsiders" win on points were delivered by Yamazaki—11-8 in the 5th over Judy; 11-8 in the 5th over Adam (who'd taken the first two games)—and, after Dickie had lost twice, by Samson in an exciting 8th match which, amidst multitudinous "CHO!" shouts from Barry and Adam, he beat an up-to-the-table, block-all-day-and-into-the-night Judy 13-11 in the 5th (after Judy had saved the 4th at 12-10).

In Group 14, last year's Division 2 winner, the Hungarian Airlines-sponsored Malev SC Hungary team, again failed to advance, was beaten by Guyana, 5-3. Which—oh yes, you could tell—didn't sit well at all with a fuming Coach Vargas. But of course he had high hopes for his two teenagers—15-year-old 2005 Hungarian Junior champ Daniel Schaffer who plays in Hungary's Second League, and 16-year-old Soma Fekete who's on the National Junior Team. "In three years," said Vargas, "these boys will be among the top 30 players in the world."

Fekete opened for Malev by splitting the first two games, then won the pivotal 3rd 20-18 to take the match from Shawn Embleton who told me that someone had told him that he was the highest rated player in the U.S. using Friendship rubber. But such a distinction might be in jeopardy, for Shawn, after having six match points on Fekete, also lost to Schaffer who, by convincingly dropping his other two matches, did not endear himself to his frustrated Coach. The third Hungarian in this tie, another 16-year-old, Miklos Keckedi, lost twice, but that was o.k.—he was primarily the Team interpreter. Fekete's remaining win was against 30-year-old Paul David, 11-9 in the 5th; his remaining loss, the deciding 8th match where he gamely went down 12-10 in the 3rd to Guyana's Anson Bispham.

And, finally, in Group 16, the NYTTTC 2 team, Captained by Gail Kendall, eliminated the East China University Boys team from contention, 5-2, in a win that might easily have been reversed. These young Chinese would be awarded the $300 for best U-18 Boys' Team—though Larry Bavlly tells me our Boston Juniors (rated 3792) went undefeated in Division 10 (average rating here 4900), so at least give them a nod. The East China Boys varied in age, height, and ability—with, not surprisingly, 13-year-old Justin Yao losing his two matches (but, coached by Gao Jun, winning his opening game against Coach Liu Hui Yuan). N.Y.'s Kazuyuki ("Kazu") Yokoyama, who, after playing in his high school days back in Japan, retired, came to the U.S. to study, played some more until he suffered a herniated disc, then quit for 5 years—he, primarily a chopper and so fun to watch, struggled to beat both He Hao 11-9 in the 5th, and Meng Zhiyu 14-12 in the 4th. Shao Yu had to work, too, to beat Meng 12-10 in the 4th, and He 11-9 in the 4th.

The only 5-3 contested match among the finalists was the New York Athletic Club Women over the Peking University Division B team (the eventual Division 2 winners over the Chinese Boys). Li ("Alicia") Yuanyuan, a former member of the Chinese National Team who afterwards went off to play in the Spanish League and coach the Granada team for 7 years, lost two for the Club women—to Ms. Shi Shengnan majoring in Journalism/Communication, and to Li Jiahui, a Senior in the School of International Relations. Lv also won his match from Yao Tong, victor over Peking's Soph Eco major Ms. Wang Ye, as well as Shi. Gao of course won all three of her matches.

**Division A Play**

As in the Preliminaries, the four round robins of 5 teams each were drawn in according to seedings—...with the four highest-rated teams that had been bryed out of Prelim play—Canada One; New York Athletic Club Men; East China University Men's Team; and Israel—heading, respectively, Divisions 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D. The two top teams from each Division would then advance into Single Elimination play to produce a quarter's, semi's, final.

In Division 1A, Canada One advanced over second-place finisher, East China University Women's Team 2. Still, against the Defending Champions, score two points for the women: Cui Chenwei 11-9 in the
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Peking University Finalists Gao Xi, Zhou Zhengqing (right) and Ding Ying (below). Liang Geliang was also on team as player/coach.

4th stood up to Pradeesban Peter-Paul’s power, and Lu Ying, down 2-0, rallied to put Bence Csaba behind the 8, 8, 8 ball. The only other tie that wasn’t won 5-0 or 5-1 saw Guyana 5-3 beat NYTTC 1 (chopper Ms. Lee Soo Yeon, a 28-year-old former L.A. professional; the Ko brothers, Carlos and Edward; Dan Kim, and penholder hitter Kim Bong Guen). Leading the attack was 41-year-old lefty Sydney Christoplie, former Caribbean Champion and 17 times Guyana Champ, and Anson Bispham, back after an injury and playing better than ever.

Guyana also put up a fight against Mexico whose players had to pay their own way here. David beat Rafael Mendez, a post-graduate student at the University of Puebla and the current Mexican National Singles finalist to 20-year-old Marcos Madrid (a winner in the Canada One tie over Peter-Paul). Bispham almost beat Rafael, going down 11-9 in the 5th, and Shawn Embleton fought to 7 in the 5th against Juan Pedro Luian, Singles runner-up at the 2006 Central American Championships.

In Division 1B, the New York Athletic Club Men advanced (without losing a match) over the struggling second-place finisher, Texas Wesleyan University Captained Coached by Olympian Jasna Reed. Give Mark Hazinski some feisty credit for pressing Gao Yan Jun. Mark lost to him, 13-11 in the 4th, 12-10 in the 5th (though, m’god, from 8-5 up in that 5th game Hazinski played abominably, finally losing it completely—at 10-0 serving into the net, and at 10-11 putting his serve return into the net). But then give Mark lots of credit for quickly getting his head together to force Thomas Keinath into the 5th, and for focusing well in ties thereafter—maybe well enough to win our Des National’s.

Thanks to both Hazinski, who’s now a Freshman scholarship student at Texas Wesleyan (a new set of pressures for Mark noted his comradely teammate Carlos Chiu), and to Yang Shigang, only just arrived in the States after playing in different clubs in Europe and coaching in Shanghai, the collegians were able—with Mark and Yang both overcoming Alex Perez and De Tran—to down the N.Y. International TTC 1 team, 5-3 (Yang losing to the ageless Li Yuxiang, and Croatian coed Ines Perhovec losing the other two matches).

Texas Wesleyan also defeated the East China University Girls, 5-2 (University...Girls?) who themselves had advanced out of the Pre-lims with a 5-2 win over Suguru Araki’s “California J Leaguers.” This was a deceptively named team (the “J” stands for?), since they’re all students at Araki’s Tohoku Fukushi University in Sendai, Japan. Anyway in this battle of the sexes (and universities), the Girls beat TFU—with Wang Xueling allowing the men some save face by dropping matches from 2-1 up to Yuichiro Yabuki and Takenori Yamazaki. These Girls, like the
Fourth Annual
Table Tennis Challenge

Friday, March 2
12 noon - 4pm: Senior Table Tennis Competition and Exhibition
Columbus Recreation & Parks 50 Plus Program
12 noon - Recreational Events: Ping pong championships in age and gender categories - must sign up 1/2 hour before the event or contact Ed at ehogshead@killerspin.com
12 noon - 7pm: Open play for all. Come by and have some fun!

Saturday, March 3
11am - 6pm: Killerspin Invitational Table Tennis Challenge
9am - 7pm: USATT (United States Table Tennis Association) sanctioned events
7pm - 10pm: Ohio Region Collegiate Team Qualifying Playoffs; The winners represent the region in the National Collegiate Table Tennis Championships at Ohio State University

Sunday, March 4
9am - 3pm: Central Ohio Collegiate Champions
Exhibition Play throughout the Weekend: Exhibition Play throughout the weekend in front of the Killerspin table tennis playing halls located on the balcony.

For additional information visit www.arnoldsportsfestival.com/killerspintabletennis or email Ed at ehogshead@killerspin.com

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Boys, would take the $300 U-18 team prize, while the TFU team would go on to top the 3rd Division.

Tex Wes, again thanks to Hazinski and Yang (who's going for a Master's in Education—he and his wife want to be teachers), also defeated the Chengdu University team, 5-3 (with Ludovic Gombos again giving up 2 matches and Yang 1 to Wang Chen). Chengdu's Yang Zhang, 19, and Huang Bang Chao, 18, were originally going to be joined by 3 other players (also presumably young men), but when all 3 couldn't get visas, Wang Chen agreed to help them out, the more so because she could use the competitive play. The teenagers' arrival on Thanksgiving Day after a 20-hour plane trip had to have taken a toll on them.

Also defeating Chengdu in the only 5-4 tie in Division 1B was the N.Y. International TTC 1 team. They'd advanced over Borat in Baltimore—the equivalent in team tildom of this year's convict-clad Boos Brothers. Wang Chen took her 3, but Huang, who'd started his professional training at 8, and at 13 was playing for his city team, lost two key matches—a 16-14 in the 4th to Alex Perez, and an 11-8 in the 5th to De Tran. And though Yang Zhang stopped Dr. De (“Such great serves, such beautiful technique these Chinese kids have,” said De), he, too, twice came up short—first, dropping a killer 13-11 game in the 5th to Li Yuxiang (such fun to see Li penhold-slash backhands), then in the 9th match rallying from two games down only to find himself 8-6 behind in the 5th to Perez. Time! Play resumes at 9-7—with neither player catching the scoring error, or being apprised of it, until after Alex ends the match with an 11-9 serve and blistering follow. Teammate Tahl Leibovitz himself couldn't have done better. Come to think of it—where was Talll? He wasn't supposed to play this tie? One was so used to seeing—and hearing—him on court...Ah, here he is, you couldn't keep him away, contributing a win, as does Alex, which, with Li's blitizes, is enough to 5-3 defeat the threatening Shanghai Girls.

In Division 1C, the top seed, East China University Men's Team, advanced easily except for their 5-3 tie with the New York Athletic Club Women. Though Gao Jun didn’t play, the men had enough trouble with each of her teammates. U.S. World Team member “Crystal” Huang beat Zhai Yibo 12-10 in the 4th; former Chinese National Li Yuanyuan beat Yang Gan, past and/or present Chinese Collegiate Champ, 11-9 in the 4th, 11-9 in the 5th; and Tawny Banh, coaching and wanting to learn more about Business Management in her study time, beat Zhai 15-13 in the 4th, and almost did in two others—lost 11-9 in the 4th to Yang and went into the 5th with Xiao Han.

Never mind that Banh and her Gao-less teammates went down 5-2 to that pesky Sparring team when only Yao Tong could bring forth wins. Tawny's pinnacle accomplishment this tournament—one she'll long remember—was 11-9 in the 4th beating Peking University Coach Laing Geliang, as his business card has it. But so what, nobody needs to look at his card. They know who he is, they line the aisles when he plays, and they know he knows how to autograph whatever his many fans give him. Tawny's win is over Liang Geliang, 1977 World Men's Doubles and 1973 and '79 World's Mixed Doubles Champion.

The N.Y. Athletic Club women could win only one tie—against the three-times shut out Left Right team...or, wait, I'm tempted to make the four-times shut out because, after John Leach, Trevor Runyan, and Whitney Ping got off to a 4-0 lead against Sparring to Win's Dubina, Yamazaki, and Rieutord, they fell into old habits and lost 5 in a row! Yamazaki, for one, was full of surprises—I was amazed at how in just 7 months after arriving from Japan he can speak English so well.

Meanwhile, though not contesting with the East China Men's team for first place, the Peking University Division A team advanced comfortably. Peking University, I learn from their attractive Delegation brochure, is perhaps the premier University in China, and site of the first Chinese National Championships in 1952. It will also, with the construction of a new Gymnasium, be the site of the 2008 Olympic Table Tennis Games.

In Division 1-D, the top-seeded Israeli team, Captain/Coached by Avishy “Avi” Schmidt, lost its preferred place in the upcoming Single Elimination draw to the undefeated East China University Women's Team 1. That visitor I spoke of from the 1960's had to be shaking his head when men from Israel and Canada, playing at an average 2600 level,
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A brand new rubber! New SOFT version is more advanced than the normal D.Tecs rubber. Fantastic sound and speed, even without speed glue. Sponge 1.8 / Max Reg $39.95. Item: RTRADT. SPEED 9.2 / SPIN 8.4 / CONTROL 7.1 / POWER 9.4

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were beaten 5-2 and 5-1 by women! In the Israeli tie, only 21-year-old Dai Ningyang, a member of the winning Chinese team at the Slovenia World University Championships, lost—to 4-time Israeli National Champion Sharan Yaniv and, perhaps a little carelessly, from 2-0 up, to Izzak Abramov, at the turn of the millennium World #112.

Against Canada Deux, East China's 26-year-old post-graduate student (Economics/Sports) Yu Jingwei, current World University Singles and (with Dai) Doubles Champion, dropped the opener to Xavier Therien, and it appeared for a moment that, if Dai, up 2-1, would lose from 17-all that marathon 4th game with Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi, the Canadians would be able to have some 2-0 momentum going. But it was not to be. And when Pierre-Luc Hinse, who'd spent two months playing in Germany this fall, couldn't win his 1st game from 13-all against Lu Ying, and Xavier couldn't win from 9-all in the 4th against lefty penholder Liu Juan, it wasn't surprising that Pierre-Luc didn't have the juice to stop Dai in the 5th.

Israel had 5-3 trouble with Canada Deux, running with a 4-1 start, but then getting temporarily blocked. Yaniv prevailed, 11-9 in the 4th over Therien, long one of Canada's best but in another life—he's almost 30 now—a settled-in computer programmer. Later, Xavier would have to key in another loss to Abramov, while Ron Davidovitz, Haifa Technical University student and currently Israel's #2, beat Hinse, as would Sharon.

But Kamkar-Parsi, given to flamboyant bursts of attack, downed both Abramov in 4 and Davidovitz in 5, and when Hinse, too, defeated Abramov, Canada Deux was 3-4 challenging. But then Yaniv, who in 2002 had beaten our present U.S. Open Champion Aleksandar Karnaksevic here in Baltimore, closed by parsing off Kamkar-Parsi's play into identifiable losing parts. The 27-year-old Homayoun, I might add, has a lot of winning parts, too. He has a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering, teaches Digital Signal Processing, and works for Siemens on hearing aids. Everyone wants to hear the sound of the ball, the crowds, yes?

Though it wouldn't affect their 2nd-place standing, the Israelis almost lost their last tie to NYTTC 2. It'd been a long day—ther 7 o'clock tie didn't finish until 11:30, and Avi thought his players had under-performed. It was he who'd got them together—all were coaching all over Israel—and the agreement was they'd pay their fair share and Avi their hotel bill.

N.Y. chopper Kaz Yokoyama, who on retiring with that herniated disc, had gotten a Masters degree in International Business, then had come back to play in 2004, losing 35 pounds in the process. Moving around the court so intensely helps him physically to forget a bothersome ear-ringing affliction. He says the Sport broadens him mentally too—for he's an assist. Also, though Khoa downed Canadians Therien and Kamkar-Parsi, his teammate John Than Thach, resolved but also regretting that his love for table tennis would keep him from family this holiday weekend, couldn't, from 10-all in the 4th, rally into the 5th against Hinse. This Viet team, however, did take the $300 over 40 prize.

Quarter's

There couldn't have been a bigger comedown than the Defending Champion Canada One team losing 5-3 in the quarter's to the Peking University Division A team. Wilson Zhang, touted by Announcer Alan Williams as "the highest-rated player in North America," came through with 3 wins (repeatedly putting a finger up as if never quite ready for his opponent's serve), but could get no help from his teammates. Beren Saai, 21, who'd been back living in Canada since April, but who this fall had trained in China and had recently played in tournaments in Paris, Bayreuth and Warsaw, won a close 1st game against Liang Gheng, then, hands repeatedly up in the air, as if more confused than exasperated by apparently not being able to read Liang's changing spin, he began to self-destruct...after losing that 2nd game dropping his racket to his foot and kicking it. Only for a moment did it get any better for him as he swatted away, seemingly ungraciously, at ball after ball. Against chopper extraordinaire Ding Ying, with the match tied, he rallied from 6-10 down in the 3rd with spectacular shots, only to lose at game point—whereupon he did an even more spectacular though abbreviated handstand/handstand on the table. Then down 10-4 match point in the 4th he popped up the ball for Ding to hit away, and when she did he absurdist jumped to try to overhead it back.

Later, Ding, who'd played 7 years on China's #2 National Women's Team, was down 1-0 but up 6-5 with Peter-Paul back repeatedly lobbing until Ding got a net—which irritated Pradee so much that he wallowed the ball into the stands, which was alright with the umpire, he sympathized, only then, unexpected turnabout, the Canadian took 6 in a row to go 2-0 up. But he didn't win—Ding, steadily returning balls, attacking more now, careful, with a backhand opening, not swatting the ball but smoothly stroking it, ousted him, 15-13 in the 5th. After that Pradee could muster no enthusiasm against Guo Xi.

Ding also had her moments against Wilson, conqueror of Denmark's Michael Maze in the Japan Open. With their match 1-1, North America's #1 goes back to his bench, to Canada's new much admired coach from Brazil,
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Thursday, July 26, 2007
Athlete Check-In
Practice
Friday, July 27, 2007
AAU Age Group Singles
AAU Age Group Doubles
Saturday, July 28, 2007
USATT Junior Nat’l Singles
Sunday, July 29, 2007
District/State Team Event
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For the Athletic Club, the slightly built, ever-bouncy Thomas Keinath took his 3rd (appearing against lefty penholder Lu Ying to accelerate his fast-paced play both at start and finish to win the 1st at 1, the 5th at 2). His teammates, in a battle of the sexes, split matches. Gao Yan Jun downed Henan’s former World University runner-up Cai Shanshan in 5, but then lost to Cui Chenwei, a 3-year veteran of the Austrian Leagues. Four-time U.S. Champion David Zhuang beat Cui, then lost 11-9 in the 4th, 11-9 in the 5th to Lu, and seemed almost avuncularly happy about it. He grabs her, I would say half-playfully, in a hug, from which she quickly extracts herself and, on coming back to her bench with a smile, puts up two fingers in a V.

The East China University Men also advanced to the semi’s, sweeping by Israel, 5-1—with Abramov’s 11-9 in the 4th, 11-9 in the 5th over Zhai Yibo the only sign of opposition. Oh well...

Semi’s and Final

Although the format changes to best 3 out of 5 matches, best 4 out of 7 games, the East China University Women’s Team 1, win or lose, will be assured of the same $600 top Women’s prize and $1200 for reaching the semi’s. But after Liu Juan blanks Liang, Chinese National Team member Gao Xi and former Super League player Yu Jingwei go at it up at the table, hopping in loops/exchanging off-the-bounce thrusts until Gao, her left hand way up for balance, her in-your-face YAH’S! as threatening as her aggressive play, proves 11-9 in the 6th slightly too much for Yu. Ding follows with an easy win over Dai who has no rhythm, no timing, no patience—and Peking needs only one more. Still, the novelty of having an historic men’s/women’s final and the buzz of a women’s winner is kept alive when Liu takes the first 3 games from Gao. But then what a deflating finish—she loses the next four (having been down 0-7 in the 7th).

For the other semi’s, the NY Athletic Club vs. the East China Men, I was told that Zhuang figured to have the best chance style-wise if he played the 3rd position, thereby playing the “weakest” East China player and maximizing the chance of a win. Additionally, our Han Xiao had trained the whole summer in China, had practiced against the very players he was now trying to beat and back then had held his own with at least one of them. However, this fall he’d begun attending the University of Maryland on an academic scholarship, so of course he was not the player he was this summer. Which was all too evident when righty penholder Yang Gan, showing off his reverse backhand, blitzed him.

But Thomas Keinath, who’s playing #3 for his Wurzburg team in Germany, and so has had to hurry over here and will have to hurry back, started strong, whipping in explosive off-the-bounce backhand flips and loops, to take a 3-0 lead against their Han Xiao (Xiao Han) and went on to win in 6.

So now with the tie even, Zhuang has come out to the table and is ready to play Zhai Yibo—or is he? Do my eyes deceive me, or do his? He appears to go over to have wife Joannie cut off a lock of his hair. It was told that Zhuang figured to have the best chance style-wise if he played the 3rd position, thereby playing the “weakest” East China player and maximizing the chance of a win. Additionally, our Han Xiao had trained the whole summer in China, had practiced against the very players he was now trying to beat and back then had held his own with at least one of them. However, this fall he’d begun attending the University of Maryland on an academic scholarship, so of course he was not the player he was this summer. Which was all too evident when righty penholder Yang Gan, showing off his reverse backhand, blitzed him.

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So now with the tie even, Zhuang has come out to the table and is ready to play Zhai Yibo—or is he? Do my eyes deceive me, or do his? He appears to go over to have wife Joannie cut off a lock of his hair. It doesn’t help—he -12, -9, -9, -10 loses four straight close games. So is there still a chance for the NYAC? Keinath goes through Yang, as if he hopes to catch an earlier flight home. And now for the deciding match...Han Xiao, no make that Xiao Han, is the straight game winner. Our Zhuang and Han, I understand, feeling they under-performed, were...
forfeiting or at least a good part of their share of the $1,200 prize
money toward teammate Tommy’s expenses.

The final wasn’t in doubt either. But after Peking’s Gao and Zhou
Zhengqing (where’d he come from?) went down 4-1, one-ball finisher
Zhai and more than one-ball returner Ding made a 6-game man-woman
fight of it. *That* for the $7,000 1st prize/$3,000 2nd prize was
dramatic.

Ding Ying (PU) d. Pradeeban Peter-Paul (CAN), -12,-5,3,4,15

**DIVISION 2: Peking University (Alex Li, Wang Ye, Shi Shengnan, Lv
Jiahui) d. East China University Boys (He Hao, Meng Zhiyu, Justin
Yao), 5-4.

**DIVISION 3: California J Leaguers (Yusichio Yabaki, Takeornori Yamazaki,
Masato Kawamura, Yasuukiyuki Takano, Takayasu Nakata) d.
americanabletennis.com (Eric Finkelstein, Scott Endicott, Alden
Fan, Augusto Bertone, Douglas Yi Li), 5-4.

**DIVISION 4: Attache Ta Tuk (Remi Tremblay, Pierre-Luc Theraiu
t, Maxime Suprenant, Francois Seguin-Leblanc) d. Swedish Chefs
(Ivan Popov, Kagein Lee, Aaron Avery), 5-2.

**DIVISION 5: Eat, Sleep and Play Butterfly (Brena Vlastic, Barbara Wei,
Olena Sowers) d. Wave Men (Tan Khoong-Hong, Jack Lam, Wayne
Ming Chin), 5-2.

**DIVISION 6: CDK Loopers (Lixin Liang, Charlie Sun, Devin Zhang, Kevin
Ma) d. Alaskan Assassins (Jorg Heger, Haitham Salman, Andrew
Hutzel, Karl Augestad), 5-2.

**DIVISION 7: The Challengers (Rondell Jordan, Kevin Kuznetzow,
Wesley Fan, Attila Mandler) d. The Triple Threat (David Jacques,
Jordan Bishop, Roxanne Deslauriers), 5-4.

**DIVISION 8: Hidalgo Mexico (Jorge Navarro, David Navarro, Luis
Fernando Chong Alvarado, Ruben Moedano) d. Albergue Olimpico
I (Manuel Adorno Caraballo, Marcos Casiano Santiago, Alexander
Citron, Anthony Rivera, Walvic Rodriguez), 5-2.

**DIVISION 9: Long Islanders (Eric Stamp, Daniel Flores, Benjamin Liu,
Kett Tingfitt) d. MATTIC RAIDERS I (Shaobo Zhu, Donald Vastine,
John Kozak, Andrew Axmacher, Steve Givson), 5-2.

**DIVISION 10: Boston Juniors (Ari Stoler, Grant Li, Brian Jin) d. The
Spinsters (Mike Jovanov, Daniel Eisenkraft Klein, Kevin Jovanov), 5-3.

**DIVISION 11: JHU Haughty Hotties I (Di Kang, Rohit Dewan, Frank
Lee, Shin-Wei (David) Chou, Norm Zhou) d. WhiteStar (John Chen,
Vanial Rema, Xin Jia, Herren Wu), 5-1.

**DIVISION 12: Don’t Let Our Age Fool U (Jeff Schiff, Christopher Brewer,
Jim Willitts) d. Newgy Florida #4 (Barbara Ruggio, William Miao,
Malcom Ah Kim), def.

**DIVISION 13: 1st Hammer Of Thor (Thomas J. Huff, Tim Snyder, C.
James Williams, Alan Bruce Williams, Al Whitney); 2nd Ponce Lions
(Manuel Gomez Jr., Xionel Feliciano, Luis Echevarria, Brandon
Echevarria, Esteban Torres).

**DIVISION 14: 1st Maryland Tigers (Gabriel Lu, Tong Long Gong, Jackson
Liang, George Nje, Alan Lang); 2nd The Deceptionists (Paul R.Nunez,
Marcos Makkar, Robert Abramato, Richard Shore).

**HIGHEST OVER 40: Vietnam Men’s Team (Khou Nguyen, John Tran
Thach, Tuan Le, Tung Phan).

**HIGHEST WOMEN: East China University Women’s Team 1 (Liu Juan, Dai
Ningyang); Yu Jingwei).

**HIGHEST UNDER 18 BOYS: East China University Boys (He Hao, Meng
Zhiyu, Justin Yao).

**HIGHEST UNDER 18 GIRLS: East China University Girls (Yu Hua, Ma
Yao).

**These results brought to you by . . . THE HAMMER OF THOR? The
Viking horde swept Division 13. L-R: Al Whitney, Thomas J. Huff,
C. James Williams, Tim Snyder; missing: Alan Williams.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2007
**Preliminaries**

**Group One:** 1st Wang Liqin (CHN), 3-0 (d. Saive, 7-6,6,2; d. Chen, -7,-8,8,3,d; d. Herzelz, 4,6,5,7); 2nd Chen Weixing (AUT), 2-1 (d. Herzelz, 5-10,10,9,9; d. Saive, -8,5,10,-7,7-13); 3rd Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 2-1 (d. Herzelz, 8,5,10-3); 4th William Herzelz (AUT), 0-3.

**Group Two:** 1st Vladimir Samsonov (BLR), 3-0 (d. Lashin, 6,11,12; d. Boll, -8,12,7,6,9; d. Krajza, 9-14,-9,9,9; 2nd Kalinikos Kreanga (GIR), 2-1 (d. Boll, -7,9,5,6,7; d. Lashin, -8,6,10,2,4); 3rd Timo Boll (GER), 1-2 (d. Lashin, 2,2,2,2,3); 4th El-Sayed Lashin (EGY), 0-3.

**Women’s Doubles**

**Group One:** 1st Wang Liqin (CHN), 3-0 (d. Saive, 7,6,6,2; d. Chen, -7,-8,8,3,d; d. Herzelz, 4,6,5,7); 2nd Chen Weixing (AUT), 2-1 (d. Herzelz, 5-10,10,9,9; d. Saive, -8,5,10,-7,7-13); 3rd Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 2-1 (d. Herzelz, 8,5,10-3); 4th William Herzelz (AUT), 0-3.

**Group Two:** 1st Vladimir Samsonov (BLR), 3-0 (d. Lashin, 6,11,12; d. Boll, -8,12,7,6,9; d. Krajza, 9-14,-9,9,9; 2nd Kalinikos Kreanga (GIR), 2-1 (d. Boll, -7,9,5,6,7; d. Lashin, -8,6,10,2,4); 3rd Timo Boll (GER), 1-2 (d. Lashin, 2,2,2,2,3); 4th El-Sayed Lashin (EGY), 0-3.

**Women’s Doubles**

**Group One:** 1st Wang Liqin (CHN), 3-0 (d. Saive, 7,6,6,2; d. Chen, -7,-8,8,3,d; d. Herzelz, 4,6,5,7); 2nd Chen Weixing (AUT), 2-1 (d. Herzelz, 5-10,10,9,9; d. Saive, -8,5,10,-7,7-13); 3rd Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 2-1 (d. Herzelz, 8,5,10-3); 4th William Herzelz (AUT), 0-3.

**Group Two:** 1st Vladimir Samsonov (BLR), 3-0 (d. Lashin, 6,11,12; d. Boll, -8,12,7,6,9; d. Krajza, 9-14,-9,9,9; 2nd Kalinikos Kreanga (GIR), 2-1 (d. Boll, -7,9,5,6,7; d. Lashin, -8,6,10,2,4); 3rd Timo Boll (GER), 1-2 (d. Lashin, 2,2,2,2,3); 4th El-Sayed Lashin (EGY), 0-3.
The North American Team for the WCC Cup was composed of:

**Cadet Girls:** Olena Sowers (USA), Ariel Hsing (USA), Carmen Lee (CAN), Peggy Hsien (CAN).

**Cadet Boys:** A.J. Brewer (USA), Justen Yao (USA), Andre Ho (CAN), Jiang Yang (CAN).

**Girls' Coach:** Emilia Gheorghe (USA); **Boys' Coach:** Christian Foisy (CAN); **Team Leader:** Chandra Madhosingh (CAN).

Prior to the tournament, the NA team participated in a four-day training camp together with players from Latin America, Oceania, Team Asia, and Serbia. The head coach for the training camp was Peter Karlsson (SWE) with Mikael Andersson (ITTF Junior program manager) the assistant coach.

The tournament started on Oct. 24 in the morning with the team's event, followed by individual events. The full results for the NA Teams and Singles & Doubles results for USA players are below.

### North American Cadet Boys' Team

#### Preliminaries

- **Japan vs. North America, 3-2**
  - Andre Ho (NA) d. Taiyo Nomura (JPN), 8-7, 5-11, 11-9, 11-8
  - A.J. Brewer (NA) d. Koki Niwa (JPN), 4-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-8
  - A.J. Brewer (NA) d. Taiyo Nomura (JPN), 11-8, 11-2, 11-5, 11-2
  - Jiang Yang (NA) d. Andre Ho (NA), 8-11, 11-6, 11-8, 11-9
- **North America vs. Oceania, 3-0**
  - Andre Ho (NA) d. Phillip Xiao (OCE), 11-6, 11-8, 11-4
  - Jiang Yang (NA) d. David Powell (OCE), 11-6, 11-8, 11-7
  - Andre Ho (NA) d. Maxime Bataillard (OCE), 11-6, 11-8, 11-8
  - Jiang Yang d. Phillip Xiao (OCE), 11-7, 11-6, 11-8
- **North America vs. Europe, 5-0**
  - Kristian Karlsson (EUR) d. Jiang Yang (NA), 11-7, 11-3, 11-8
  - Piotr Chodorski (EUR) d. Andre Ho (NA), 11-8, 11-9, 11-7
  - Mate Moricz (EUR) d. Justen Yao (NA), 11-7, 11-9, 11-5
  - Piotr Chodorski (EUR) d. Jiang Yang (NA), 11-7, 11-9, 11-5
  - Jiang Yang (NA) d. Phillip Xiao (OCE), 11-7, 11-6, 11-8
- **Serbia vs. North America, 3-0**
  - Marko Petkov (SRB) d. Andre Ho (NA), 11-8, 11-7, 11-4
  - Bojan Crepulja (SRB) d. Jiang Yang (NA), 11-6, 11-7, 11-8
  - David Powell (OCE) d. Andre Ho (NA), 11-8, 11-7, 11-9
  - Tanjil Beqiri (SRB) d. Jiang Yang (NA), 11-7, 11-9, 11-7
- **Europe vs. North America, 5-0**
  - Andre Ho (NA) d. Phillip Xiao (OCE), 11-8, 11-7, 11-4
  - Jiang Yang (NA) d. David Powell (OCE), 11-7, 11-9, 11-8
  - Andre Ho (NA) d. Maxime Bataillard (OCE), 11-6, 11-8, 11-8
  - Jiang Yang d. Phillip Xiao (OCE), 11-7, 11-6, 11-8
  - A.J. Brewer (NA) d. Yao Jordan Shing (OCE), 11-4, 11-6, 11-8

### USA Cadet Boys' Singles

#### Preliminaries

- **Group Three:** 4th A.J. Brewer (USA), 0-3 (lost to Taiyo Nomura JPN, 8,10,6; Marko Petkov SRB, 9,7,11,6; Rodrigo Gilabert ARG, 7,4,7,6)
- **Group Four:** 1st Justen Yao (USA), 0-3 (lost to Piotr Chodorski POL, 7,6,6; Mahmoud Zaghfolh EGY, 9,6,5; Felipe Olivares CHI, 5,8,11,10,5)

#### Playoffs

- **17-32:** Justen Yao (USA) d. Dragan Subotic (SRB), 5-10,6,11,9; Mahmoud Zaghfolh (EGY) d. A.J. Brewer (USA), 11-5,9,10
- **17-24:** Rodrigo Gilabert (ARG) d. Justen Yao (USA), 2,3,8,14
- **21-24:** David Powell (USA) d. Justen Yao (USA), 9-9,6,12
- **23-24:** Justen Yao (USA) d. Jiang Yang (CAN), 6-8,8,5
- **25-32:** Nikola Popov (SRB) d. A.J. Brewer (USA), 7,7,3,7
- **29-30:** A.J. Brewer (USA) d. Maxime Bataillard (NCL), 11-6,5,8
- **25-30:** A.J. Brewer (USA) d. Yao Jordan Shing (VAN), 8,7,8

### USA Cadet Boys' Doubles

#### Round One

- **9-16:** A.J. Brewer/Justen Yao (USA) d. Dragan Subotic/Yao Jordan Shing (NCL/VAN), 5,10,10
- **9-12:** Marcelo Aguirre/Rodrigo Gilabert (PAR/ARG) d. A.J. Brewer/Justen Yao (USA), 5,4,9
- **11-12:** A.J. Brewer/Justen Yao (USA) d. Andre Ho/Jiang Yang (CAN), 11-8,11,10,6
Huntsman World Senior Games
St. George, Utah • Oct. 9-13 2006 • By Grant Misbach

This was the 20th anniversary of the Huntsman World Senior Games and the 15th anniversary of the Table Tennis competition. We received over 190 applications including participants from nine other countries, both new records. Derek and Doreen Schofield, who came for the first time last year and said it was the friendliest and most hospitable tournament they have ever attended, were back. It was pleasing to see two players attend who couldn’t compete because of medical problems. They both said that they still WANTED to be there. One said his best friend was there.

We are trying to get more tables and more space for next year to take care of the increased attendance. If we are not successful we may have to limit applications. So be sure to send in your entry forms early.

This year it was decided to institute a Huntsman World Senior Games Hall of Fame. Grant Misbach was inducted into this Hall of Fame in the duel capacity of Athlete and Volunteer.

The tournament next year will be held Oct. 8-12. You should also get your motel reservations early because over 9,000 people attend these games. Those wanting more information can call 1-800-562-1268 (toll free, USA only) or 1-435-674-0589, fax 1-435-674-0589, or email hwsg@infowest.com. Their website is www.seniorganes.net. Hope to see you next year.

Men’s Singles
Age 50-54 — Gold: Lon Dean (CA); Silver: Borko Dragojlovic (CA); Bronze: Chuluun Ogtinbaatar (MGL).
Age 55-59 — Gold: Ray Mack (NY); Silver: Mark Wade (AK); Bronze: Billy Fu (NV).
Age 60-64 — Gold: William Forsberg (CA); Silver: Mac Hot-n (TX); Bronze: Merrill Newren (UT).
Age 65-69 — Gold: Derek Schofield (ENG); Silver: Ray Pestridge (OK); Bronze: Len Lukey-Ott (CAN).
Age 70-74 — Gold: Barry Meisel/Vince Meimeny (ESP); Silver: Walli Baecker/Mary Nauman (MN); Bronze: Jan Stansel/Jan Stansel (OH).
Age 75-79 — Gold: Harriet Brin (CA); Silver: Rosemary Davis (MO); Bronze: Patricia L. Thomas (TX).
Age 80-84 — Gold: Ruslan Gao (TX); Silver: Gustav Rey (GER).
Age 85+ — Gold: Ivan Slade (CA).

Women’s Singles
Age 50-54 — Gold: Song Reed (TN); Silver: Diann Darnall (AK); Bronze: Marilyn Feinstein (CO).
Age 55-59 — Gold: Yelena Karshtedt (CA); Silver: Elin Posner (NV); Bronze: Jane Lawhurst (CO).
Age 60-64 — Gold: Irina Hellwig (CA); Silver: Kuniko Jessup (CA); Bronze: Lai Fun Lukey-Ott (CAN).
Age 65-69 — Gold: Doreen Schofield (ENG); Silver: Joyce Arpon (NV); Bronze: Ruth Gove (TN).
Age 70-74 — Gold: Harriet Brin (CA); Silver: Rosemary Davis (MO); Bronze: Patricia L. Thomas (TX).
Age 75-79 — Gold: Bill Ryan/Irina Hellwig (CA); Silver: Karen Huffman/Wolfgang Rentschler (GER); Bronze: Yelena Karshtedt/Irina Hellwig (CA).
Age 80-84 — Gold: Lisa Modlich (TX); Silver: Tybie Sommer (AZ); Bronze: Dorothy Peterson (MN).
Age 85+ — Gold: Mary Coonan (CAN).

Men’s Doubles
Age 50-54 — Gold: Willie Escobar/Lon Dean (CA); Silver: Moses Lan/Mark Davis (CA/MD); Bronze: Borko Dragojlovic/Jun Galban (CA/IL).
Age 55-59 — Gold: Robert Janes/Mark Wade (AK); Bronze: Duane Gall/David Newcomb (CO).
Age 60-64 — Gold: Byng Forsberg (CA); Silver: Mac Hot-n (TX); Bronze: Men-ill Newren (UT).
Age 65-69 — Gold: Tom Miller/Shonie Aki (CA); Silver: Kurt Hoffman/Wolfgang Rentschler (GER); Bronze: Ralf Eckof/Jan Loeser (DE).
Age 70-74 — Gold: Barry Meisel/Vince Meimeny (ESP); Silver: Walli Baecker/Mary Nauman (MN); Bronze: Jane Magnus/Verla Boyle (AZ/CAN).
Age 75-79 — Gold: Harriet Brin (CA); Silver: Rosemary Davis (MO); Bronze: Patricia L. Thomas (TX).
Age 80-84 — Gold: Loesel/Ruslan Gao (CA/TX).
Age 85+ — Gold: Lee Ebel/Ruslan Gao (CA/TX).

Women’s Doubles
Age 50-54 — Gold: Song Reed/Ruth Gove (TN); Silver: Maril Feinstein/Thelma Sommers (CO/PA); Bronze: Lai Fun Lukey-Ott (CA/TX).
Age 55-59 — Gold: Elin Posner/Jane Lawhurst (NV/CO); Silver: Robert Janes/Mark Wade (AK); Bronze: Jane Lawhurst (CO).
Age 60-64 — Gold: Lai Fun Lukey-Ott/Nahed Williams (CA/FL); Silver: Harriet Brin/Thelma Sommers (CO/PA); Bronze: Jane Magnus/Verla Boyle (AZ/CAN).
Age 65-69 — Gold: Dereen Schofield/Ruth Hua (ENG/TN); Silver: Harriet Brin/Irina Hellwig (CA); Bronze: Jenny Longee/Joanne Gipple (CO).
Age 70-74 — Gold: Ruslan Gao (TX); Silver: Albino M叹了 (CA); Bronze: Juanita A. A. M tus (CO).
Age 75-79 — Gold: Harriet Brin (CA); Silver: Rosemary Davis (MO); Bronze: Patricia L. Thomas (TX).
Age 80-84 — Gold: Lisa Modlich/Dorothy Peterson (TX/ST); Silver: Kay Bowen/Mary Coonan (UT/CAN).
Age 85+ — Gold: Mary Coonan (CAN).

Mixed Doubles
Age 50-54 — Gold: Lon Dean/Harriet Quon (CA); Silver: Ben Lewis/Song Reed (TX/TN).
Age 55-59 — Gold: Dereen Schofield/Ruth Hua (ENG/TN); Silver: Harriet Brin/Irina Hellwig (CA); Bronze: Yelena Karshtedt/Edward Curran (CA/FL).
Age 60-64 — Gold: Ralph Stadelman/Janice Adair (NV); Silver: Bill Ryan/Irina Hellwig (CA); Bronze: Lai Fun Lukey-Ott (CA/TX).
Age 65-69 — Gold: Dereen Schofield/Ruth Hua (ENG/TN); Silver: Bill Ryan/Irina Hellwig (CA); Bronze: Bill Ryan/Irina Hellwig (CA).
Age 70-74 — Gold: Byng Forsberg/Rosemary Davis (CA/UT); Silver: Al Palumbo/Margo Lindsay (FL); Bronze: Sid Stansel/Jan Stansel (OH).
Age 75-79 — Gold: Robert Janes/Mark Wade (AK); Silver: Harriet Brin/Thelma Sommers (CO/PA); Bronze: Robert Schowen/Kay Bowen (NV/UT).
Age 80-84 — Gold: Ruslan Gao/Lisa Modlich (TX).
Age 85+ — Gold: Gustav Rey/Mary Coonan (GER/CAN).

Rated Singles
2000+ — Gold: Ray Mack (NY); Silver: Lon Dean (CA); Bronze: Bill Ryan (WA).
1800-1999 — Gold: Ray Forsstrom (CA); Silver: Ralf Eckof (SWE); Bronze: Chuluun Ogtinbaatar (MGL).
1600-1799 — Gold: Mark Wade (AK); Silver: Billy Fu (NV); Bronze: Moses Lan (CA).
1400-1599 — Gold: Mark Wade (AK); Silver: Borko Dragojlovic (CA); Bronze: Vin Paul Hua (TN).
1200-1399 — Gold: Allan Ferrenberg (NV); Silver: Larry Ladd (NV); Bronze: Mircea Pella (FL).
1000-1199 — Gold: Joyce Arpon (NV); Silver: Diann Darnall (CA); Bronze: Lai Fun Lukey-Ott (CA).
800-999 — Gold: Cliff Demartini (CA); Silver: Marge Starr (NV); Bronze: Jane Lawhurst (CO).

Under 800 — Gold: Cliff Demartini (CA); Silver: Marge Starr (NV); Bronze: Jane Lawhurst (CO).

Random Draw Doubles
Gold: Ray Mack/William Swift (NY/NH); Silver: Vince McMenamy/Mike Nauman (NV/CA); Bronze: Borko Dragojlovic/Sorenman Jampnaya (CA/TX).
Highland Open 3-Star
South Bend, IN • Nov. 18-19, 2006 • By Dan Seemiller

The 3rd annual Highland Open tournament was held on 32 tables in the spacious Highland Parks & Rec. Fieldhouse. 182 players from the Midwest participated in the 3-star event. The tournament was sponsored by South Shore Sports Promotions, a division of the Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau. The tourney itself was hosted and run by the South Bend Table Tennis Club.

In the Open Singles, Mark Hazinski was down 3-1 in the final to Sasa Drinic before pulling it out 4-3. The fifth game went to deuce a couple of times before Mark won it 14-12. There was the point of the year in game six that featured loops, counterloops, great net retrieves and even a dive by Sasa. It was awesome. Mark went on to win game seven, 11-6. The semifinalists were 13-year-old A.J. Brewer, who lost 4-1 to Mark, and Dan Seemiller, who lost 4-1 to Sasa.

In the rating events, Dan Seemiller and Sasa Drinic knocked off juniors A.J. Brewer and Joe Cochran in the semifinals before splitting the final in the 2550. Joe Cochran won the 2400 event over Phil Tam. A.J. Brewer won Under 2250 over Paul Pashuku, and Dan Seemiller Jr. defeated Bob Powell to win Under 2125. Excellent results for the South Bend junior players.

In Under 2000, Tomasz Jablonski just got by rising cadet player Brian Figg. In Under 1875, veteran Bruce Harris was the winner over Raymond Sacco. The 1750 winner was youngster Ronald Li over Bill Thompson. James Engstrom won Under 1625 over Deepak Somarapu. Kevin Lau took the 1500 event over Benjamin Gross. Michael Delbello won the 1350’s over Rich Buttenhoff while John Shehadeh defeated youngster Drew Wilson in the 1200 event. Dean Ginther defeated Sam White in the 1000’s and Drew Wilson won a second rating event by downing Michael Organ in the 800 final.

In both the 40’s and 50’s it was Dan Seemiller over Dave Sakai. The junior events were won by Natalia Snigurskaya against C.J. Brewer in the Under 14 and Joe Cochran over A.J. Brewer in the Under 18 final. Dan Seemiller Jr. and Andre Khailo were the semifinalists.

Many thanks go to all the players who participated in this year’s event. We had a record number of junior players and new competitors who joined USATT. Also, the sportsmanship was outstanding throughout the weekend.

We would like to thank Jason Sands of South Shore Sports for sponsoring this event. Thanks also to our team of workers from the South Bend TT Club and the Highland TT Club, Jason Demann, Phil & Kara Schnucker, Dan & Mary Cochran, Barry & Stella Chan, Brad Balmer, Jim Willitts, Eric Arnett, Mark Nordby, Keith Jones, Adil Dhanani, Deb Berkebie, Val Seemiller and the S.B. Junior Team.

And a special thanks and a job well done to tournament referee Kagin Lee.

Make plans and mark your calendars for the 3-star St. Joseph Valley Open to be held at the IUSB Athletic Center on March 17 & 18, 2007 in South Bend, Indiana.
Colorado Springs Open
Colorado Springs, CO • Oct. 21-22, 2006
By Larry Rose

The Colorado Springs Open is back after a one-year hiatus. Saturday’s events included the Mountain Region Junior Championships, won by Luke Hays of Wyoming. Sanjiv Thakor and Richard McAfee were each double winners – Thakor in Under 1850 and Over 30s and McAfee in Over 40s and Over 50s.

On Sunday morning, McAfee made it three wins in a row by partnering with Under 2000 winner Nobuyuki Shigoi to beat Thakor and Charlie Solomon in Open Doubles. Richard was aiming for a fourth victory in Open Singles. In the semifinal, McAfee was hard-pressed by Alii Elliott, who had a 4-1 lead in the best-of-9 match. Richard knew that he had to do something different, so he changed his tactics and managed a fine comeback, winning 5-4. Yes, Richard, we’ll remember that next time you don’t want to play best-of-9! The other semifinal featured two penhold loopers: Mi Li of Colorado Springs and Lingli Liu of Boulder. Mi Li prevailed, but not without a struggle. McAfee and Li had met a few months ago at the Aurora Trainwreck, with McAfee coming out ahead, but this time Mi Li’s fast loops, and much improved shot selection, were too much for McAfee, who had to settle for second place.

Many thanks to the helpful staff of the Hillside Community Center, as well as to the officials and staff: Bob Tretheway and Charleste King. Thanks also to those who helped with setup and teardown, notably Richard Howard, Ken Linie, Mike Tarter and Dana Jeffries. Open Singles – Final: Mi Li d. Richard McAfee, 7,-7,10,8,9,9, SF: Li d. Lingli Liu, 8,7,7,6,6,6; McAfee d. Alii Elliott, 8,-9,8,6-11,9,7,4.


Over 30 – Final: Sanjiv Thakor d. Derek Stanley, 9,-7,6,7,5; SF: Stanley d. Ken Liu, 3,7,9; Thakor d. Ken Lewis, 8,13,6,9.


Over 50 – Final: Richard McAfee d. Richard Howell, 9,2,3; McAfee d. Marvin Sommers, 8,7,3; Howell d. Lee Rodriguez, 1,2,2.

Combined Junior Regional Championships
1st Luke Hays, 4-0; 2nd David Beaubien, 3-1; 3rd Adam Preiss, 2-2.

Class A (U2000) – Final: Nobuyuki Shigoi d. Ron Lusk, 8,8,5, SF: Shigoi d. David Hays, 8,4,7,5,7-5,7; Lusk d. Derek Stanley, 8,9,-7,7,7-5.


Class C: Richard Howard d. Michael King, 11,9,-11,8,8.

Class D: Luke Hays d. Danilo Noble, 8,-9,9,-6,9.

Class E: Lee Rodriguez d. Victor Smith, 5,9,10,5, SF: David Beaubien d. Marlen Chen, 11,-3,6,7.

U1200: David Beaubien d. Marlen Chen, 11,-3,6,7.


2006 Paul Cracraft Memorial Sportmanship Award: Jon Redman.

Kitsap County’s 1st Open
Bremerton, WA • Sept. 9, 2006
By Florence Lovelace

An hour’s picturesque ferry ride across the Puget Sound from Seattle takes you to the Kitsap Peninsula. In September, Kitsap County Facilities, Parks & Recreation presented the County’s first ever Table Tennis Tournament in Bremerton’s Kitsap Sun Pavilion. A huge thanks goes to Bruce Waterbury, Recreation Specialist, for making it possible! His wife, Debbie, brought her cookies with her smiles and was a big help at the check-in table. Thank you also to Felisa Huggins of USATT, Bad Oven and Ernie McAfee of the Tacoma Club, Kirby & Mary Ann Parker of the Tri-Cities Club, and Marilyn & Norm Ward of Seattle. Special thanks go to Dustin Badgett and brothers Dennis & Don Williams who helped scorekeeper Jim Lovelace keep his sanity.

There were 56 participants, 14 entering that morning. Using USATT ratings for ten+, we were able to start with a 10-table round robin for everyone to play in (we had 14 tables), with the wide range of skills gave competitors and spectators fun in playing and watching table tennis in friendship in a wonderful venue. In recent years Kitsap County updated the Pavilion to accommodate sports activities, with better lighting and padding over the concrete floors. We are very grateful to them for giving table tennis enthusiasts this wonderful opportunity to show that we have an Olympic sport to be nurtured in our community.

Wes Wolfe, President of the Denver Table Tennis Club 1980-88, now lives in WA, and is currently ranked sixth in the U.S. in Over 70 Men. In his words, “...for table tennis to continue to grow, we must get it out of the basement. Your facility is the best in the State of Washington.”

Next year, Bruce would like to present a tournament with a computer keeping the scoring! If you would like to be on our list, please send your Name & Address to Kitsap TT Club, P. O. Box 1537, Silverdale WA 98383 or email thatinfo to lovelace@silverlink.net. If you have any concerns (that we may be able to address), that would help you decide to come, please include those also.


Open Doubles: 1st Bill Ryan/David Kith.

Women: 1st Tam Hoang.

Masters 50-59: 1st Larry Chinn; 2nd Ken Quitugua.

Masters 60-69: 1st Bill Ryan; 2nd Alex Sumeri.

Masters 70-79: 1st Craig McGubKen.

Masters 80 and Up: 1st Bud Osten.

Women’s Masters: 1st Lois Bonn.

18 & Under Men: 1st Sean Burton; 2nd Wayne Steffens.

18 & Under Women: 1st Breanna Zinter, Bremerton; 2nd Blanda Tran.

Biggest-Little Reno Sparks 6th
Reno, NV • Sept. 30, 2006 • By Mimi Ortegon

From exciting action to delicious Polish dogs the consensus of participants at the Reno Sparks Biggest Little #6: “a great tournament.”

Much credit goes to Craig Krum who, with his excellent “Tournament Management System” computer program, expedited the assignment of matches, tables, and the speedy posting of results.

One of the most popular events, the Over 40/Under 1800, featuring 18 players in six round robins, was won by Bob Wolf (San Luis Obispo) over Michael Hsing (Palo Alto).

The Open Singles attracted top players from the Bay Area including Shashin Shodhan (2411) who has plans to begin a junior program there, Martin Kosan (2374), of Sacramento, and Freddie Gabriel (2492) from Concord. Freddie won the Open over Shashin in five games (9,5,9,6).

The young set was delightfully represented by 10-year-old Parth Upadhyay (959) from Milpitas who defeated 84-year-old Harry Ehrmantraut from Oregon in the Under 1100 contest and Table Tennis rising star, 10-year-old Ariel Hsing (2029), who won the Under 2150.


U1900: Yurio Boyko d. Bob Wolf, 9,-13,4,8,9.

U1800/Over 40 Bob Wolf d. Michael Hsing, 9,6,8,10,8.

U1700: Bob Wolf d. Phil Campbell, 9,10,9.

U1500: Anthony Cavazos d. Anthony Chen, 8,9,-7,7.

U1300: Anthony Chen d. Skip Polachek, 8,4,8,2,8.

U1100: Parth Upadhyay d. Harry Ehrmantraut, -6,7,8,5.

U3000 Doubles: Billy Fu/Michael Low d. Phil Campbell Skip Polachki, 6,8,1,6.

Butterfly MDTTC Oct. Open
Germantown, MD • Oct. 28-29, 2006
By Wei Xiao

The Open Final of the Butterfly MDTTC October Open saw a very exciting battle between Han Xiao and Raghuv Nadmicchettu as Han pulled it out in a close 4-3 battle. Raghuv forced the seventh game by winning game six, 20-18! The tournament attracted about 80 players from MD, VA, NY, RI and PA. Thanks to all participants and visitors for making this tournament a success.

Open – Final: Han Xiao d. Raghuv Nadmicchettu, 9,-6,7,10,-18,8; SF: Xiao d. Marcus Jackson, 4,5,8,7; Nadmicchettu d. Nazruddin Asgarali, -6,10,7,8,10; QF: Jackson d. John Wetzler, 7,5,8; Asgarali d. Joseph Wang, 4,12,9.

U2200 – Final: Lixin Ling d. Hiep Tran, 9,-8,3,3; SF: Ling d. Richard Bowling, 7,9,-8,2; Tran d. Joseph Wang, 6,7,6,7.

U2050 – Final: Rohan Gilkes d. Yongqiang Zhang, 5,9,-9,9; SF: Gilkes d. Sutinat Tangyimong, -6,6,5,-9; Zhang d. Julian Waters, 8,-9,12,8.

U1900: Reginald Willard d. Justin Kung, 7,7,12,8,5.

U1850: Xin Jia d. Nathan Kang, 5,1,10.

U1600: Carson Truong d. Xiao Guo, 4,7,9,5.

U1350: David Goldstein d. Vikram Raja, 4,8,9.

U1100: Alan Lang d. Vikram Raja, 3,7,8,10.
14th Annual Millcreek Open

Out for glory and money in 21 events, including the welcome addition of 22 Canadians, fought it out by Sam Steiner.

Johns game and while he can still play, he was in the country. This vacation took a toll on hardbat play. Where he is currently ranked #3 again with sponge after many years of strictly

old Torben Niemeier, a German exchange student living in the Akron area with the Pech family. Torben entered only one event, Under 2200 - Final: Ken Pinili d. Dan Seemiller Jr., 3-0.

After losing to the defending champion, Randy Seemiller, 3-1. Pat Yost d. Mark Ken Roskos, 3-1. Class 5: Tom Yost, 0-2.

Under 17: Dan Seemiller Jr. d. Jason Leung, 3-1. Class D: 1st Alex Yang, 2nd Joseph Cochran competing for the second time this year.


There were many exciting and close matches during the tournament, but two are especially noteworthy. The first was against Champion Torben Niemeier in a Foothills Championship final. The second was against Younger, who was winning under 2200 and advancing in under 2400.


The first of these was against Champion Torben Niemeier, the latest star student Joe Cochran: our spring welcome addition of 22 Canadians fought in 21 events including a few new handball events. The second was against Champion Torben Niemeier, who was winning under 2200 and advancing in under 2400.


The final match of the tournament was against Champion Torben Niemeier, who was winning under 2200 and advancing in under 2400. The match was played out of Ottawa, going all the way to the final. The Oddsmakers were not sure how the close matches but may be losing some of his winning.


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2006 NNTTC Fall Open
Newport News, VA • Sept. 9-10, 2006
By Bernard Ebballar

The NNTTC would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the participants for a very successful and exciting Fall Open Tournament. We feel that this has been one of the best since the inception of the club in 2004. We also want to thank our two major sponsors, The City of Newport News and Table Tennis Pioneers, for their continued support in our quest to provide competitive table tennis for all.

This year we had players come from the local Tidewater area, Northern Virginia, and as far as South Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, and Philadelphia. It was very gratifying to see such a large turnout and the wide range of styles and talent.

We would like to recognize this year’s “Big Gainer” (players that gained more than 150 rating points), for the tournament. They are: Scott Gordon (+441), Richard Chiavar (233), Adam Sylvester (+227), Helen Ni (+220), Thomas Paul (+164), Do Nguyen (+154) and Joseph Hawkins (+154).

Tournament Highlights

In the “Open” Singles on Saturday, Hiep Tran, Lim-Ming Chui, Raghu Nadmichettu and Han Xiao advanced to the final round robin. As expected, Han Xiao was the star of the day, dominating the Open from start to end and beating everyone 3-0. Earlier in the day, Nadmichettu beat Chui in the final of Under 2350. In the Open, Chui upset Nadmichettu, 15-13 in the fifth game, and finished second. Nadmichettu finished third, and Tran fourth.

On Sunday, Mark Berg and Dan Barrett made it to the Under 1900 final. It was a match the crowd thoroughly enjoyed, with two players of opposite styles. Berg plays a placement and control game; Barrett plays a game with power and basic solid strokes. The match was a battle of tactical maneuvers, with both players careful with their serves. Every game was close, each point a battle. In the end, Berg managed to block and make several key shots to win the critical end points to win the Under 1900 Division.

In summary, this year’s tournament had many great players, great points, upsets, and moments of triumph. Unfortunately, we don’t have space to showcase them all. We (NNTTC) thank all participants and invite them to all our future tournaments.

Open Singles: 1st Han Xiao, 3-1; 2nd Lim-Ming Chui, 2-1; 3rd Raghu Nadmichettu, 1-2; 4th Hiep Tran, 0-3.


U2350 – Final: Raghu Nadmichettu d. Lim-Ming Chui, 8,8,8; SF: Nadmichettu d. Nhan Nguyen, 8,1,6,5; Chui d. Hiep Tran, 7,9,7.

U2200 – Final: Edward Watts d. Ilya Moundous, 1,7,2; SF: Watts d. Fernando Ramirez, 6,3,7; Moundous d. Jim McQueen, 9,6,9.

U2050 – Final: Chris OBrian d. Michael Hsu, 9,9,9; SF: OBrian d. Jim McQueen, 8,11,9; Hsu d. Ashwin Peres-da-Silva, 7,6,5,8.

U1900 – Final: Mark Berg d. Dan Barrett, 6,7,9,8.

U1750 – Final: Michael Adjei d. Orlando Terry, 10,7,6,9.

U1600 – Adam Sylvester d. Orlando Russell, 7,9,6,7.

U1450 – Adam Sylvester d. Joseph Hawkins, 8,6,6.


Over 55 – Final: Lim-Ming Chui d. Jim McQueen, 6,11,6; SF: Chui/Orlando Terry, 50,8; McQueen d. Jarold Williams, 7,7,6.

U3600 Doubles: Hiep Tran/Hop Pham d. Dan Barrett/Dean Johnson, 8,9,3,9.

Sacramento Open
Sacramento, CA • Oct. 28, 2006
By James Therriault

The Sacramento Fall Open had some wild cheering and tired players on Saturday evening October 28th at Rosemont High School.

The Giant Round Robin was a fun, but also a tiring experience for first timers as they realized they were still alive after their initial Round Robin group in Classes A, B, or C. About half the field of 149 players received a trophy. Many of the kids appreciated that, especially in the lower divisions, where Terence and Vivian Sun took home three trophies between them. Terence out-dueled his sibling in the Under 450 Final, and also won the Under 750.

In the higher events Jeremy Nau and Mark Johnson were on fire most of the day, as Mark edged him 3-2 to take the exciting Under 1900 Event. Modesto’s Ryan Niu took down Adam Bobrow (thanks for coming from Southern Cal!) to win Under 2200. The Open was won by Freddige Gabriel who got past Jackie Lee in the semi. Shashin Shodhan almost pulled off a terrific comeback, but fell 3-2 to Barney Reed in the other exciting semi. The team event drew a gratifying to see such a large turnout and the wide range of styles and talent.

We would like to recognize this year’s “Big Gainer” (players that gained more than 150 rating points), for the tournament. They are: Scott Gordon (+441), Richard Chiavar (233), Adam Sylvester (+227), Helen Ni (+220), Thomas Paul (+164), Do Nguyen (+154) and Joseph Hawkins (+154).

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U2350 – Final: Raghu Nadmichettu d. Lim-Ming Chui, 8,8,8; SF: Nadmichettu d. Nhan Nguyen, 8,1,6,5; Chui d. Hiep Tran, 7,9,7.

U2200 – Final: Edward Watts d. Ilya Moundous, 1,7,2; SF: Watts d. Fernando Ramirez, 6,3,7; Moundous d. Jim McQueen, 9,6,9.

U2050 – Final: Chris OBrian d. Michael Hsu, 9,9,9; SF: OBrian d. Jim McQueen, 8,11,9; Hsu d. Ashwin Peres-da-Silva, 7,6,5,8.

U1900 – Final: Mark Berg d. Dan Barrett, 6,7,9,8.

U1750 – Final: Michael Adjei d. Orlando Terry, 10,7,6,9.

U1600 – Adam Sylvester d. Orlando Russell, 7,9,6,7.

U1450 – Adam Sylvester d. Joseph Hawkins, 8,6,6.


Over 55 – Final: Lim-Ming Chui d. Jim McQueen, 6,11,6; SF: Chui/Orlando Terry, 50,8; McQueen d. Jarold Williams, 7,7,6.

U3600 Doubles: Hiep Tran/Hop Pham d. Dan Barrett/Dean Johnson, 8,9,3,9.

Three-Player Teams

Under 6000: Milpitas 2 (P. Wu, V. Tai, J. Huang) d. Milpitas 1 (B. Liu, M. Zhang, M. Johnson).

Under 5400: Lim-Ming Chui d. Michael Hsu, 9,9,9; SF: OBrian d. Jim McQueen, 8,11,9; Hsu d. Ashwin Peres-da-Silva, 7,6,5,8.

Under 5000: Nearest Pennsylvania Open

Nanticoke, PA • Nov. 4, 2006
Open: 1st Patrick Mualem 2nd John Wetzler.
Women: 1st Noga Nir-Kistler 2nd Sonia Skolnick.

2350: 1st Vladimir Iodkovsky 2nd John Wetzler.
2000: 1st Don Feltenberger 2nd Martin Theil.
1800: 1st Keming Liang 2nd James Hawkins.
1600: 1st Bruce Holek 2nd Noga Nir-Kistler.
1400: 1st Micaiah Skolnick 2nd Gabriel Skolnick.
1200: 1st Ming Sun 2nd Sonia Skolnick.
1000: 1st Michael Johnson 2nd Sonia Skolnick.
USA Tournament Results

Potomac Open
Potomac, MD • Nov. 11-12, 2006
Open – Final: Han Xiao d. Qassim Aziz, 7,6,7,6; SF: Xiao d. John Wetzler, 5,10,10,6,12; Aziz d. Raghu Nadmichettu, 3,9,12,8; \*; SF: Xiao d. Peter Li, 8,7,9,7,9,9,9; Tetzler d. Maresiah Sahu, 8,5,6,10.
U2300 – Final: Nazruddin Asgarali d. Ed Watts, 9,7,7,3; SF: Xiao d. Joseph Wang, 6,8,8,8; Peter Li, 8,7,9,8,8,8; Raghu Nadmichettu d. Caleb Fan, 5,4,6.
Raghu Nadmichettu, 3,9,12,3; QF: Xiao d. 6,6,7; SF: Bolzum d. Hyo Won Kim, 3,4,8,6.
U2000 – Final: Jens Bolzun d. Gary Schlag, 6,6,7,7; SF: Bolzun d. Hye Won Kim, 3,3,6; Schlag d. Bryan Wilson, 5,6,9,8.
U1900: Jens Bolzun d. Roland Quibote, 7,6,8,8.
U1500: Sam Berry d. Paul Armentano, 9,9,10,13.
U1200: Varvar Zemskova d. Jason Liang, 6,6,7.
U1420 Doubles: 1st Raghu Nadmichettu/ Rohan Gilkes, 2,1/5-3,2; Caleb Fan/Joseph Wang, 2,1-3,5-3; Amrashes Sahu/Vikash Sahu, 2,1-3-3.
U3600 Doubles: 1st Paul Kovac/Sam Huang; 2nd Ray Glass/Paul Nichols.

Maryland Circuit
Eldersburg, MD • Oct. 7-8, 2006
U2800 Doubles: 1st Yonnel Kronlage/Scott Barnett; 2nd Steve Hochman/Elliott Hamilton.

Maryland Circuit
Eldersburg, MD • Nov. 4-5, 2006

Arkansas Open
Little Rock, AR • Nov. 4, 2006
Open – Final: Robert Roberts d. Paul David, 4,9,10,10,6. SF: Roberts d. Thomas Yu 6,6,6,4,6.

Geneseo Valley Two-Person Teams
Rochester, NY • Nov. 12, 2006
Group B: 1st Bill McNally & Chris Watson; 2nd Fritz Gunther & Leon Clark.

New Jersey September Open
Westfield, NJ • Sept. 16-17, 2006
U2300: 1st Barry Dattel; 2nd Santos Shih.
U2150: Thomas Yu & Gary Osmanoff split.
U1850: Andy Hoi d. Emile Goldstein, 10,7,5,7,5.
U1750: Sukumar Desai d. Brian McKnight, 6,10,5.
U1600: Allen Wang d. Mike Trusiewicz, 7,8,10,7,9.
U1200: Samuel Yagi d. Roger Barr, 4,6,7,2,6.
U1000: Daniel Li d. Mikel Goldblatt, 4,9,10.
Under 16: Allen Wang d. Amar Desai, 9,8,8,8.
Under 12: 1st Nathan Hsu, 2nd Annie Shi, 3rd Tina Lin.

New Jersey October Open
Open – Final: Robert Roberts d. Paul David, 4,9,10,10,6; SF: Roberts d. Thomas Yu 6,6,6,4,6.
U2300: Barry Dattel d. David Rosenweig, 9,7,8,7.
U2150: Bill Vogel d. Kevin Powell, 9,8,7,9.
U1850: 1st Nagendra Rentala, 2nd Mark Croitoro, 3rd Farhad Jafari.
U1750: Nagendra Rentala d. Dennis Coppola, 6,7,4.
U1600: Samuel Yagi d. Peter Xing, 9,9,5.
U1400: Dinesh Harry d. Paul Nunez, 5,8,4.
U1200: Angel Alicea d. Peter van Drumpt, 7,9,4.
U1000: Barry Huang d. Stephanie Santiago, 6,10,6,6.
Under 18: 1st Ryan Gittelson, 2nd Jeff Sussman, 3rd Dachel Martinez.
Under 14: Allen Wang d. Nathan Hsu, 9,10,6,7,10.
U3400 Doubles: Anthony Gegelys/Sam Huang d. Allen Wang/Dennis Coppola, 8,6,9,9,7,3.

New Jersey November Open
Westfield, NJ • Nov. 11-12, 2006
U2300: David Rosenweig d. Da Tang, 4,9,3,11.
U2150: Da Tang d. Wojciech Kiszewski, 8,9,4,4,11.
U2000: Wesley Fan d. Peihe Yuan, 6,9,7,9,7.
U1850: Dave Kilpatrick d. Max Chitcherbakov, 9,7,9.
U1600: Grant Li d. Peter Xing, 9,9,9.
U1200: Brian Huang d. Barry Huang, 14,9,7,9,11.
U1000: Stephanie Santiago d. Bruce Crawford, 12,7,7,15,9,8.
Under 18: Angel Alicea d. Barry Huang, 6,7,9,11.
Under 14: Barry Huang d. Emily Yang, 7,10,9,7.
U3400 Doubles: Anthony Gegelys/Sam Huang d. Dibong Qiu/Brian Qiu, 10,4,3.

New Jersey December Open
Westfield, NJ • Dec. 16-17, 2006
Open – Final: Robert Roberts d. Paul David, 6,6,6,4.
U2300: Barry Dattel d. David Rosenweig, 9,7,8,7.
U2150: Bill Vogel d. Kevin Powell, 9,8,7,9.
U1850: 1st Nagendra Rentala, 2nd Mark Croitoro, 3rd Farhad Jafari.
U1750: Nagendra Rentala d. Dennis Coppola, 6,7,4.
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Arkansas Open Players
Photo by Kit Odomm. ©2006

USA Table Tennis Magazine • January/February 2007
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 Lupulescu, Ilija
2. IN 2576 Hazinski, Mark
3. MD 2569 Cheng, Yinghua
4. NJ 2554 Zhuang, David
5. MD 2562 Xiao, Han
6. CA 2533 Nguyen, Khoa Dinh
7. TX 2571 Owen, Eric
8. MD 2536 Huang, Tong Sheng Jack
9. CA 2519 Reed, Barney J.
10. TX 2518 Wang, Jiachen David
11. CA 2519 Reed, Barney J.
12. NY 2509 Shao, Yu
13. CA 2503 Perez, Alexis
14. TX 2497 Rop, Darko
15. IN 2474 DeWitt, Rich
16. CA 2491 Johnson, Ben
17. CA 2470 Gabriel, Freddie
18. CA 2470 Gabriel, Freddie
19. CA 2463 Fu, Shu (Sara)
20. NY 2467 Aronov, Nison
21. CA 2452 Dubina, Samson David
22. OH 2452 Dubina, Samson David
23. FL 2452 Dubina, Samson David
24. MA 2427 Chui, Chi-Sun
25. CA 2419 Tran Thach, John

TOP WOMEN
1. IL 2676 Lupulescu, Ilija
2. MD 2669 Cheng, Yinghua
3. NJ 2654 Zhuang, David
4. TX 2598 Wang, Yin
5. MD 2592 Xiao, Han
6. CA 2533 Nguyen, Khoa Dinh
7. NY 2564 Li, Yu Xiang
8. NY 2561 Li, Yu Xiang
9. NY 2558 Li, Yu Xiang
10. NY 2556 Li, Yu Xiang
11. CA 2497 Rop, Darko
12. CA 2470 Gabriel, Freddie
13. CA 2470 Gabriel, Freddie
14. CA 2470 Gabriel, Freddie
15. NY 2598 Wang, Yin
16. CA 2471 Alban, Keith
17. CA 2471 Alban, Keith
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19. CA 2471 Alban, Keith
20. NY 2463 Tran, De C.
21. NY 2452 David, Paul
22. OH 2452 Dubina, Samson David
23. PA 2452 Wetzler, John Mark
24. CA 2451 Huang, Lin Jeff
25. TX 2435 Gombos, Ludovic A.

TOP OLYMPIC ELIGIBLE WOMEN
1. MD 2672 Gao, Jun
2. NY 2602 Wang, Chen
3. CA 2506 Batk, Tansy Ai
4. TX 2477 Rees, Jasna
5. CA 2471 Huang, Yao Xi
6. CA 2471 Huang, Yao Xi
7. CA 2374 Lee, Jacqueline
8. NJ 2365 Yip, Lily
9. OR 2362 Peng, Whitney
10. CA 2274 Chen, Diane Dongye
11. NJ 2246 Judy, Judy
12. OR 2221 Yang, Simone Xiao Min
13. CA 2217 Elizabeth, Ali
14. OK 2215 Wang, Heather Hu
15. MD 2172 Wei, Barbara
16. OH 2166 Xiao, Olena S.
17. MD 2156 Wu, Katherine
18. CA 2155 Fong, Atta
19. NY 2154 Panch, Svetlana
20. MD 2133 Liu, Charlene Xiao Ying
21. CA 2111 Do, Michelle
22. NY 2062 Ma, Karen
23. OH 2086 Maet, Jennifer Mae
24. NJ 2049 Shih, Stephanie C.
25. CA 2048 Dole, Gina

Top Tournaments Processed

This list was compiled on 01/28/06 (ages are as of that date) and includes all tournaments received through 11/26/06. Due to space limitations, this document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2007.

New Tournaments Included in Ratings

N. American Tourneys
SOAR Open Southern Arizona TTT
5th Fit Open TT Championships
3rd Annual Highland Open
November Open
Middle Creek Mini-Circuit Open
FL Open Sanburs Tour
Maryland Giant RR
GVTTC Two-Person Teams
Brooklyn TTC Open
Vidich Steg PacRim Open
NJITTC November Open
Potomac RR
Brier Creek Debut Open RR
DFW Fall Open

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**USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE** January/February 2007
January 6 - 7 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
January 7 - 2007 Winter Broward TT Open, Davie, FL. Contact: Carlos Zeller, 954-849-5436. czell@9549565@aol.com. **

January 13 - 2007 FL Open Sunburst TT Tour, Clearwater, FL. Contact: Keith Hanley, 727-669-0899. gouger39@aol.com. **
January 14 - 6th Annual Holiday Classic, Allentown, PA. Contact: Fred Kistler, 610-797-6637. f.kistler@yahoo.com. *

January 20 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
January 20-21 - NJTTC January Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 908-654-9009. tournament@njttc.org. **

January 25 - DTTT Butterfly Winter Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact Wei Xiao, 202-414-8128. weixia042@hotmail.com. **
January 20 - Charlotte Open 2 Man Team Tournament, Charlotte, NC. Contact: John Paul, 704-587-1162. charlottettt@carolina.com. **

January 27 - Dixie Open Giant RR, Hattiesburg, MS. Contact: Herb Bennett, 601-606-6578. herbbenn@aol.com. 0 Star
January 27 - 2007 Rhode Island Winter Classic, Manville, RI. Contact: Mohammad Al-Sabek, 401-338-9096. al-sabek@yahoo.com. *

January 28 - Circle City Giant RR, Indianapolis, IN. Contact: Robert Clyde, 317-895-8394. rdclyde@indytabletennis.com. **
February 3 - 4 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
February 3 - Arkansas Closed, Little Rock, AR. Contact: Eugene Atha, 501-835-5291. catha@swbell.net. 0 Star
February 17 - Columbus Giant RR Open, Columbus, OH. Contact: Steve Slaback, 614-899-1415. sslaback@columbus.rr.com. **
February 17 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

February 18 - New Hampshire RR Open, Manchester, NH. Contact: Donald Hayes, 603-894-7422. don@centipede.us. 0 Star
February 23-24 - Central FL Winter Open, Lakeland, FL. Contact: Raymond D. Spann, 863-965-0760. rayspann@verizon.net. **

February 24-25 - Arizona Open, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Mark DeWitt, 602-421-0227. 0 Star
March 3 - Atlanta Giant RR, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Wendell Dillon, 770-922-5110. pong35@msn.com. **
March 3 - MO State Winter Games, Springfield, MO. Contact: William Lewis, 417-890-8092. ecpotmagick@aol.com. **
March 3 - Texas Wesleyan Open, Ft. Worth, TX. Contact: Jasna Reed, 817-531-7555 (c). jareed@twes.edu. **
March 3 - Alabama Open TT Championships, Anchorage, AK. Contact: Karl Augestad, 907-277-8115. acvid@alaska.net. **
March 3 - 4 - Atlantic Open TT Championships, Anchorage, AK. Contact: Karl Augustad, 907-277-8115. acvid@alaska.net. **
March 16-18 - Cary Cup Championship, Cary, NC. Contact: Michael Babuin, 919-462-3931. mike.babuin@townofcary.org. **

March 17-18 - 42nd St. Joseph Valley Open, South Bend, IN. Contact: Danny Seemiller, 574-261-4545. vseemiller@earthlink.net. **
March 17-18 - NJTTC March Open. Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 908-654-9009. tournament@njttc.org. **

March 24-25 - The 2007 John Schneider Memorial Open, Reseda, CA. Contact: Dirk Nguyen, 818-648-5898. d3896@msn.com. **
March 24 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
March 29-April 1 - 2007 ACUI College Nationals, Columbus, OH. Contact: Wally Lepanlo, 850-445-0780. president@nctta.org. **

March 31 - 2007 FL Open Sunburst TT Tour, Clearwater, FL. Contact: Keith Hanley, 727-669-0899. **
March 31-April 1 - Golden Western Open, Santa Monica, CA. Contact: Ichiro Hashimoto, 818-700-0948. ichiro.hashimoto@csun.edu. **

March 7-8 - MDTTC Butterfly Spring Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiao, 301-916-4862. weixia042@hotmail.com. **
April 14-15 - PA State Championships Closed, Middletown, PA. Contact: Donald Vastine, 717-944-7154. drrsrve@gmail.com. **
April 14-15 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
April 19-20 - NJTTC May Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 908-654-9009. tournament@njttc.org. **

April 22 - 2007 Millcreek Giant RR, Erie, PA. Contact: Samuel Steiner, 814-833-8704. samsteiner@compuserve.com. **
April 27-28 - ITT League Singles, Sherwood, AR. Contact: Eugene Atha, 501-835-5291. catha@swbell.net. 0 Star
April 28 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
May 4-5 - Central Florida Spring Open, Lakeland, FL. Contact: Brad Woodington, 863-965-0760. rayspann@verizon.net. **
May 5-6 - No, Kentucky/ Cincinnati 2007 Open, Highland Heights, KY. Contact: Greg Thompson, 859-781-5050. gtnotes@hotmail.com. ****
May 5-6 - Maine TT League Spring Open, Lewiston, ME. Contact: Richard Shea, 207-782-7018. ulsa@localnet.com. **
May 5-6 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
May 12 - Texas Wesleyan Open, Ft. Worth, TX. Contact: Jasna Reed, 817-531-7555. jareed@twes.edu. **
May 19 - Maryland Giant RR, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star
May 19-20 – NJTTC May Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavly, 908-654-9009. tournament@njttc.org. **

May 26-27 – 2007 Eastern Open, Piscataway, NJ Contact: NATT, 301-738-8250. info@nattabletennis.com. ****

May 26-27 - Golden State Open, Walnut Creek, CA. Contact: Philip Schaffer, 925-689-7463. philicki@hotmail.com. **
May 31-June 3 - Meiklejohn North American Seniors Open, Laguna Woods, CA. Contact: Ray Kunze, 949-583-1695. rknuze@comcast.net. ****

March 18-20 - 2007 Gold Cup, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: Steve Slaback, 702-896-8800. sslaback@columbus.rr.com. **
Risk and reward are inextricably linked. When NATT began the North American Tour in the year 2000, it was at great risk with no clear idea what the rewards would be, if any. At this point, I am happy to say that the Tour, with the sponsorship support of STIGA, Table Tennis Pioneers, Senoda, the Ying-Lo Junior Competition and the Sol Feingold Memorial Events, is stable and self-supporting. This allowed NATT to realize a long-term goal and hold a “STIGA Tour Final” at the end of the 2006 season. We were able to return to one of our favorite venues, the Ford Center at Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA.

NATT has long desired to reward their loyal player base, so this tournament had expanded prize money, a total of $7,500 distributed, and trophies for all event Finalists and Champions, even in the money events! Perhaps neatest of all, anyone who won a category at a Tour stop in 2006 was given credit for one free event entry here, the thought being not just to reward those who have tasted victory throughout the 2006 Tour, but also to acknowledge the player’s support, which conquered NATT’s risks.

Stanford’s Table Tennis Club provided manpower for setup and teardown. Those energetic Cardinals also fulfilled a fund-raising need by delivering pre-paid hot lunches on both days of competition.

The event design was also redone, pushing back Sunday’s Single Elimination matches in Open Singles until later in the day and moving the Under 1850 forward to allow as many participants as possible to view the Championship match at 5PM. A feature court was created surrounded by bleachers in the Burnham Pavilion of the Ford Center, and 300 enthused spectators were treated to one of the best matches of the year in the Tournament’s title event. So while much was risked to reach this point, the reward was commensurate.

Referee Azmy Ibrahim and his umpiring contingent, Joseph Yick, Kenny Tien, Tom Miller and William Chan did outstanding work throughout the tournament. There were no major disruptions, disputes or controversies during the 2006 STIGA Tour Finals, just exceptional play and exemplary sportsmanship.

One excellent example of that play and sportsmanship was provided by Lily Zhang. This young lady took both the Under 13 and Under 16 Girls titles in the Ying-Lo Competition, and teamed with Natalie Sun to win Under 3200 Doubles. There was more female talent on display here than usual, as Atha Fong won a tough six gamer over Sally Su for Under 18 honors, and Zheng Jiaqi bested Jackie Lee in Under 22 Women. Both Sara Fu and Zheng Jiaqi were seeded into the Open Singles Second Stage Round Robins, and provided Saturday’s best match in the Women’s Singles Final. Sara had the upper hand there, downing Zheng, 7-8, 10, 3-7, in a test of skill and stamina that drew much appreciative applause.

Speaking of stamina, I need to mention Trevor Runyon. Thanks to entering five events, Trevor played nearly non-stop on both days. He took second place in Under 2500, losing to Freddie Gabriel in four games, and second place in Under 18 Boys, where he nearly upset Qiang Shen, a 200 rating-point favorite. When the dust settled, Trevor was dispatched in a real barnburner, 3-8, 8-12, 10, 9, 11. Trevor fell one match short of qualifying for the Open Singles Second Stage Round Robins, losing to Shashin Shodhan. Shashin was simply too quick off the bounce for the bone-weary youngster. Qiang Shen has less trouble gaining the Under 22 title, 4-1 over Auria Malek.

Tuan Le didn’t fall short in much, winning the Sol Feingold Memorial Over 40 singles, placing first in the Under 2375 rating event (where he held off John Leach) and Qualifying for Open Singles where he notched an upset win against Sara Fu. Danny Leung and Liu Qingmin each took home a pair of first-place finishes as well, Danny carrying away the Under 1100 and Under 950 trophies, while Qingmin captured both the Under 1550 and Under 1700 events. One of the most satisfied faces of the tournament belonged to Ted Chen, the Over 50 Champion. Matched against the skilled and well-admired Peter Chen in the Final, Ted prevailed by scores of 12, 13, 4 and 9.

These players all richly deserved their rewards, risking their ratings and their self-esteem in lively competition, but the truly big reward was in Open Singles. In an effort to end the season with a bang, NATT had put $3,500 on the table for the Final match, with only...
$1,000 of that destined for the runner-up. Pre-tournament buzz was all about the potential rematch of Stefan Feth, who had won the Western Berkeley, San Diego and SoCal Open titles, and Wilson Zhang, Canada’s #1 rated player. Early in the season in San Diego, Stefan had overcome a 3-0 game deficit against Wilson in a semifinal match. Both of them were aware of the presence of the other as Saturday’s Round Robin play began.

**Group One**

Zhang, Johnson, Gabriel, Au

That 2501-rated Freddie Gabriel was a ‘C’ player in the Round Robins gave evidence of just how strong a field had assembled for the battle here at Stanford. Wilson opened a lot of eyes for those locals who had not seen his aggressive and compact game before when he blasted Freddie 4-0 in the very first match, 1,7,8,5. Qualifier Kevin Au was tied at two games apiece with jovial Ben Johnson before succumbing, -0,7,8,-5,3,6. Wilson added straight game victories against both Kevin and Ben to finish 3-0 and claim the #1 slot. Kevin Au nicked Freddie for one game, but finished at 0-3 in this impressive group. That left Ben and Freddie to determine who would advance to the Sunday Quarterfinals. Trading games down the line, Freddie finally prevailed 11-5 in the seventh game, bouncing the second-seeded Johnson and guaranteeing himself Quarterfinalist money.

**Group Two**

Feth, Kamkar-Parsi, Fu, Le

Sara Fu, the women’s champ, couldn’t really press Stefan, a World Top 200 player, 6,1,4,5. Tuan Li pressed against the Canadian, Kamkar-Parsi, but couldn’t break through, 8,8,7,11. The fiery Homayoun Kamiar-Parsi gave his best against Stefan, but 5,12,3,10 and Feth was 2-0. Tuan Le was behind Sara Fu 2-1, but turned that into a 3-2 advantage. Sara is extremely competitive, though, and won game six, only to see her comeback negated, as Tuan won in seven games. Stefan bested Dr. Le in four, though Tuan seemed to genuinely enjoy their first meeting. An exhausted Fu declined to play Homayoun, and so Feth and Kamkar-Parsi were both advanced to the Quarters.

**Group Three**

Wang, Reed, Yang, Shodhan

With his status uncertain through the week, ‘C’ seed Yang Zhang was a Top 12 seed in Open Singles, but when push came to shove he was out of the country, a victim of an expired visa and some poor decisions by the U.S. State Department. That left three players to vie for two spots. Barney Reed made quick work of both Wang Yin and Shashin, not even dropping a game on his way to a first-place finish. Wang Yin found himself tied with Shodhan at two games apiece despite having outscored them 40-33 in those games. Wang won the last two games by identical 12-10 margins, and was advanced to the Quarterfinals as the group’s second-place finisher.

**Group Four**

Nguyen, Qiang, Zheng, Malek

Khoa Nguyen has no trouble with the talented Zheng Jiaqi, a victory in four straight games. Auria Malek makes a contest of each game with Canada’s Qiang Shen, but 7,10,7,11, can’t crack the win column. When Khoa plays Qiang, it’s the fourth and fifth highest seeds in the tournament playing each other. After six games, Khoa has won games two and three, but the other four are all Qiang Shen wins. Zheng Jiaqi notches a win over Auria, also in six, and Auria needs to beat Khoa to stay in contention. Malek plays his best and does grab two games from the Olympian, but it’s not enough. Qiang Shen has a great match with Zheng to cap the group, 9,-10,7,8,-10,8 and secure first place. At two wins and one loss, Khoa comes second.

**Quarterfinals**

Wilson Zhang vs. Khoa Nguyen

This is Khoa’s penalty for finishing second in his group; he gets to face the tournament’s top seed in the Quarters. Wilson’s powerful shot-making draws oohs and ahs from the spectators, most of whom are rooting for Khoa. Zhang’s game is perfectly suited to his physique, compact and muscular, close to the table and incredibly quick. He snapshots without telegraphing his intentions, and uses a deceptively simple service game to three ball

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**5th FIT Open BioCalth Table Tennis Championships**

New York, NY • Nov. 18-19, 2006 • By Lily Yip

Our 5th FIT Open BioCalth Table Tennis Championships was a great success. We would like to thank our sponsors BioCalth International, Kramer Appraisal Services, Metroworld Corp and Fashion Institute of Technology for their generous support of our tournament.

The Open event was won by Atanda Musa over Shao Yu, both of New York, and the Team event was won by Chinatown over last year’s team winner Brooklyn. The Women’s event was won by Wang Chen over Judy Hugh.

Everyone enjoyed the great conditions and the convenient location. We were thankful for the great support we received from the local Table Tennis Community and also from the players that traveled from as far away as Las Vegas, Nevada. We look forward to another FIT Open next March 2007.

**Open – Final:** Atanda Musa d. Shao Yu, 7,-9,4,6; SF: Musa d. Paul David, -9,-6,3,2; Shao d. Chen Wang, 7,8,5; QF: Musa d. Igor Shulkin, -9,8,8,7; David d. Kazuyuki Yokoyama, 5,10,11; Shao d. Shawn Embleton, -9,8,7,3; Wang d. Taliban Leibovitz, -5,5,5,5.

**Teams:** 1st Chinatown (Peihe Yuan, Wilson Wei, Zhi Wei He); 2nd Brooklyn (Kelvin Duesbury, Vibert Williams, Percival Dublin).

**Women:** 1st Wang Chen; 2nd Judy Hugh.

**College:** 1st Victor Leung; 2nd Ye Zaw.

**Under 18:** Orlando Mcewan d. Emile Goldstein, 9,9,9.

**Under 15:** 1st Boson Wu; 2nd James Cheung.

**Under 13:** Boson Wu d. Nathan Hsu, 10,9,11,6.

**Under 11:** Simon Shtofmakher d. Nick Bergunker, 4,10,9,6.

**Open – Final:** Atanda Musa d. Shao Yu, 7,-9,4,6; SF: Musa d. Paul David, -9,-6,3,2; Shao d. Chen Wang, 7,8,5; QF: Musa d. Igor Shulkin, -9,8,8,7; David d. Kazuyuki Yokoyama, 5,10,11; Shao d. Shawn Embleton, -9,8,7,3; Wang d. Taliban Leibovitz, -5,5,5,5.

**Teams:** 1st Chinatown (Peihe Yuan, Wilson Wei, Zhi Wei He); 2nd Brooklyn (Kelvin Duesbury, Vibert Williams, Percival Dublin).

**Women:** 1st Wang Chen; 2nd Judy Hugh.

**College:** 1st Victor Leung; 2nd Ye Zaw.

**Under 18:** Orlando Mcewan d. Emile Goldstein, 9,9,9.
Wilson wins his Quarterfinal and Khoi has to settle for $160 in prize money.

**Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi vs. Barney Reed**

Barney is proving the premises all weekend, examining the angles, the lighting, and the ambiance, in what reminds me of a carnivore scouting its territory. By contrast, Kamkar-Parsi is, as usual, calm, cool and collected. That changes as soon as he is courtside, and he’s a bundle of determination ready to do battle. Each game here is a struggle and the match is mentally tense. Soon, however, Reed is facing a 3-1 deficit, and while he does gain a 12-10 victory in the fifth, his back is clearly to the wall. Kamkar-Parsi closes the door, 9-5,7-9,10-7. Post-match Barney asks if we would stop announcing the total of his prize money, “It makes me feel like such a loser.” I’m not sure how making the final eight in this field qualifies for that statement, but it’s clear Barney had hoped for better.

**Qiang Shen vs. Freddie Gabriel**

The Canadian players are not frequent visitors to the Bay Area, and more than one spectator comments that “that guy doesn’t even appear to be trying!” Qiang has a perfectly self-contained court manner, but that shouldn’t fool anyone, this kid can play, and play brilliantly! Freddie has his hands full with this one and absolutely rises to the challenge. He applies a very effective service game to take control of the match. Wilson Zhang coaches earnestly between games, but the younger only nicks Gabriel once, taking game four 11-5. It’s on to the Semifinals for Freddie Gabriel, 3,10,8,-5,10.

**Stefan Feth vs. Wang Yin**

Where is Wang Yin? No one seems to know. Did the gentleman from Texas not realize that two players advance from the Round Robin Groups? Did he decline to play the tournament’s #2 seed for some reason? Was this an Alien Abduction? I have no answer, but I also have no Wang Yin. Feth advances by default against a no-show. That’s not what we hoped to see!

**Semifinals**

Wilson Zhang vs. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi

Teammates, but competitors. That’s bound to happen in the upper reaches of an SE bracket. Kamkar-Parsi gives a very good account of himself here, and the match has several newcomers in the stands rooting for the determined underdog. Homayoun tries to beat Wilson at his own game, which is not all that different from his own. The result is lightning-quick exchanges, right at the table. Backhand blocks, disguised and misdirected, sharply mailed forehand flurries and an in-tight service game ... there will be no lobbing here! Wilson is, however, less vulnerable to error, and while Kamkar-Parsi finds his share of down-the-line backhand winners, Wilson is clearly in control. By scores of 9,7,1,4, Zhang reaches the Tour Final and Homayoun gets $400 and a nice round of applause.

**Stefan Feth vs. Freddie Gabriel**

Playing the semis side-by-side gives a great contrast. Just as Homayoun and Wilson are banging away in a knife-fight, close in and deadly fast, Feth and Gabriel are playing a completely different kind of game. The two men have similar builds, tall and lanky, and play a power-looping game from mid-distance. Feth has a nasty side-spin snap on his forehand loop, and it’s a definite bother to the internationally ranked Stefan. Stefan sees Freddie’s backhand has fewer options, and his own backhand is definitely working today. This match is highly competitive, but Feth has the right answers at crucial junctures. Scores of 7,11,8 and 4 send Feth to the Tour Final and Freddie gets $400 and a lot of compliments. “I am just playing for fun these days, I am not training very seriously.” Well, it must be fun to play as well as Gabriel! Feth gains the Semifinalists honors.

**Championship Match**

**Stefan Feth vs. Wilson Zhang**

The stands are packed, the officials are in place, and Wilson and Stefan face each other for only the second time this year. Previously, in San Diego, Stefan had overcome a 3-0 game deficit, trailing 7-2 in the fourth game to defeat the Canadian powerhouse. What factor that would play was anyone’s guess. You must be so mentally tough to succeed in these spotlighted, pressure situations. That was very much the point in NATT tournament planning. The risk is high; the attention of everyone in the building is focused on these two men and nothing else. The reward will be great, as the winner takes away $2,500, a great difference from the finalist’s $1,000 prize. Wilson seems to have memories of that San Diego match as he starts poorly. He appears flat, nervous in the glare of the spotlight. Stefan is focused and “in the zone.” He misses nothing and quickly 11-3 wins the first. In game two, Feth continues to build the big lead, but Wilson shakes the cobwebs away with 25 points into the match. Despite a late charge, Feth gains game two, 11-8, and leads 2-0. Play now becomes spectacular. It’s rally after unbelievable rally, impossible shots answered and a spellbinding struggle. Wilson breaks through in game three, 11-9 despite Feth’s incredible edge ball on an impossible third straight lob against Wilson’s kills. But Feth is a strong fighter.

Game four produces one of the best shots I have ever seen. Taken wide to his forehand, Feth has to hurry back to the opposite wing, catches a ball less than two feet off the ground, below table height, and makes a tremendous full force backhand loopkill that brings a deafening roar from the astonished crowd. Stefan goes ahead 3-1, notching the fourth game 11-9. Now it is Wilson trailing, only one game from defeat. But Zhang plays fearlessly. The match continues to unfold and the players bring out the best in each other. Both use their timeouts. The tension is incredible, and Wilson takes two games in a row to even the match, 11-7 and 11-7. Before game seven can begin, the fans stamp and sing “We Will Rock You,” bursting into spontaneous cheers for both players as they are introduced one last time. It’s electric! Two fists punched high in the air, a huge scream, and 11-8 in the seventh game the 2006 STIGA Tour Final goes to Wilson Zhang!

What a match! What a thrill! What a way to end the year!

NATT President Richard Lee takes the checks to the table and a knot of fans take photos to preserve the moment. The video cameras are packed away; the crowd reluctantly departs, buzzing about the brilliant and memorable play.

Myself, I am taken by a moment of reflection. Eight years ago, in Richard Lee’s dorm room, a college student asked “If tournaments were better run, if Finals happened on schedule; when everyone could see them, if international players were involved and arena conditions created, would USATT members respond and support those tournaments?” It has taken eight years of struggle, risk and more work than I care to consider, but at the 2006 STIGA Tour Finals, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA, October 20-21, I think the question has been answered. We, as USATT members, have been rewarded.

**Open Singles – Final**

Wilson Zhang d. Stefan Feth, 3,-8,9,-7,7,7,8; SF: Zhang d. Homayoun Kamkar-Parsi, 9,7,1,4; Feth d. Freddie Gabriel, 7,11,8,4; QF: Feth d. Wang Yin, def.; Gabriel d. Qiang Shen, 3,10,8,-5,10; Kamkar-Parsi d. Barney J. Reed, 9,-5,7,9,-10,7; Zhang d. Khoa Nguyen, 8,3,3,5.

**Open Doubles**

1st Wilson Zhang/Shen Qiang; 2nd Freddie Gabriel/Jackie Lee.

**Women**

Sara Fu; 2nd Zheng Jiaqi.

**U2500**

1st Freddie Gabriel; 2nd Trevor Runyan.

**U2375**

1st Tuan Le; 2nd John Leach.

**U2250**

1st Voltaire Benedicito; 2nd Wei-Sung Tsao.

**U2125**

1st Wei-Sung Tsao; 2nd Shing-Li Sung.

**U2000**

1st Shing Sui Sit; 2nd Mark Kent.

**U1850**

1st Pratul Bhaidasna; 2nd S.V, Le.

**U1700**

1st Qiang Shen; 2nd George Zhao.

**U1550**

1st Qiang Shen; 2nd Brian Chen.

**U1400**

1st David Hanson; 2nd Jun Zhang.

**U1250**

1st Sam Chan; 2nd Michael Wong.

**U1100**

1st Danny Leung; 2nd Justin So.

**U950**

1st Danny Leung; 2nd Bryan Gee.

**U800/Unrated**

1st Truong Tu; 2nd Venkat Simhadri.

**U4200 Doubles**

1st Shing Sui Sit/Wei-Sung Tsao; 2nd Bo Ding/Dennis Ong.

**U3200 Doubles**

1st Natalie Sun/Lily Zhang; 2nd Paul Chin/Tom Li.

**Open Doubles**

1st Shing Sui Sit/Wei-Sung Tsao; 2nd Bo Ding/Dennis Ong.

**U2250 Doubles**

1st Natalie Sun/Lily Zhang; 2nd Paul Chin/Tom Li.

**Under 60**

1st Tuan Le; 2nd Quan Huynh.

**Under 50**

1st Ted Chen; 2nd Peter Chen.

**Under 40**

1st Tuan Le; 2nd David Chiu.

**Under 25**

1st Shing Sui Sit; 2nd Trevor Runyan.

**Under 18 Girls**

1st Alysha Fotig; 2nd Serena Babih.

**Under 18 Boys**

1st Trevor Runyan.

**Under 10 Girls**

1st Prachi Jaila; 2nd Teddy Wii.

**Under 10 Boys**

1st Ethan Chuit; 2nd Aashay Simhadri.

**Under 14 Girls**

1st Prachi Jaila; 2nd Natalie Runyan.

**Under 14 Boys**

1st Trevor Runyan.

**Under 12 Girls**

1st Prachi Jaila; 2nd Natalie Runyan.

**Under 12 Boys**

1st Trevor Runyan.

**Under 10 Girls**

1st Prachi Jaila; 2nd Natalie Runyan.

**Under 10 Boys**

1st Trevor Runyan.

**Under 8 Girls**

1st Prachi Jaila; 2nd Natalie Runyan.

**Under 8 Boys**

1st Trevor Runyan.

**Under 6 Girls**

1st Prachi Jaila; 2nd Natalie Runyan.

**Under 6 Boys**

1st Trevor Runyan.

**Under 4 Girls**

1st Prachi Jaila; 2nd Natalie Runyan.

**Under 4 Boys**

1st Trevor Runyan.
2006 SoCal Open
Balboa Park Activity Center • San Diego, CA • Oct. 7-8, 2006 • By Alan Williams

The cliché says that the only constant is change. At the 2006 SoCal Open there was change, as shown in the increasing skill displayed by Canadian elite player, Xavier Therien, and constants, like the welcome aid of the San Diego Table Tennis Association. NATT, which organized and ran the competition, was grateful for their assistance, which has been constantly outstanding. The Balboa Park Activity Center is one of the premier table tennis venues in America and our 200 participants were able to take good conditions for granted. Likewise, Linda Hsing and her umpiring and score-keeping crew, Saul Weinstein, Ruben Kairy, William Chan and Chloe Nguyen, were stable, constant, and more than capable of handling any situation, although, glad to say, very few arose.

Former World Champion Stellan Bengtsson has made a change of address, and he and his wife, the former Angie Rosal, are now living in the San Diego area. It was a pleasure to see both these famous players in attendance at Sunday’s final! There were plenty of great performances and indicators of changing ability, especially among the younger players.

In San Diego we have the privilege of seeing the Alto family, and this group, Earl, John, and Don, are three of the more talented and better balanced young players in America. It’s always a pleasure to have them, and their results show that they’ve been working on their games. Don came second to Jeff Huang in the Ying-Lo Junior Competitions Under 22 category, dropping a tough seven-gamer. John took both the Under 16 honors, besting Sang Lien and Under 13, over Anand Engineer. John also came second in both the Under 2000 and Under 1850 rating events, with only Marco Sanchez Jr. and Travis Greene, respectively, keeping him off the top rung.

Arjun Desai came second in the Under 10 competition to Ethan Chua, dropping a seven-game final, but had the big trophy in the Under 950 category to keep him company. Erica Wu was first in both Under 13 and Under 16 girls, finishing ahead of Ellen Hwang and Ana Laura Ascension. It was Ellen Hwang, however, who caused exasperated queries to the control desk, from her Under 1850 RR Group. “Are you positive that girl is 1200?” we were asked. “She plays like 1900! Can you please check her rating?” Her rating’s accurate, but based on her opponent’s reactions, will soon be changing.

Xiankun Yang mastered two events, the Under 1550 and the Under 1400, leaving Neal Bergman and Albert Huang in his wake. Crystal Huang wrestled the Women’s title away from her practice partner, Tawny Banh, and then they went on to have separate adventures in Open Singles.

In the Sol Feingold Memorial Senior categories, Takashi Miyamoto took the Over 60 singles from Ni Zhang Yuan in six close games. Takashi was also second in the Over 50, where he couldn’t solve Dave Sakai. The Over 40 singles had a great finish when Guillermo Munoz bested Dr. Tuan Le, 4-2. It wasn’t to be Guillermo’s last good win of the weekend, either!

“I need to believe that I can win before I will win.”
-Ben Johnson, of his match with Stefan Feth

Open Singles Second Stage Round Robins

At NATT events, we’ve become fond of the process to find the Open Singles Champion. We remove the Top 12 players by rating and “seed them out” to four round robin groups that play on Saturday afternoon and evening. There they are joined by four qualifiers from the Main Draw, one per group. At this level, all matches are the best of seven games, and two players advance from each group to the Sunday Quarterlyfinals. Because two players advance, the order of play is slightly different within the groups. In accordance with ITTF procedures, the B vs. C match is played last, as it is most pivotal in selecting the advancers.

Group One
Feth, Therien, Gabriel, Chan

The strength of the Open Singles field was clearly evident as Freddie Gabriel, rated 2492, wound up as the “C” player in the group.

Barney Reed, John Johnson, and Shao Yu. the B seed, is 0-3. and Reed, Munoz and Huang are tied with 2-1 match records. Game record between the tied players breaks the tie, and it’s Reed’s 7-6; Munoz, 7-7; Huang, 6-7. Barney and Guillermo advance, Crystal is disappointed and Shao asks “What the heck was THAT?”

Group Three
Reed, Shao, Munoz, Huang

If Group Two offered no surprises, Group three was nothing but surprises! See, change is the only constant. Right off the bat, in the first match, Barney Reed meets Guillermo Munoz and wins the first three games as though it was just another day at the office, 3, 1, and 1. Barney had won their last meeting, in a much more competitive match, at the 2004 STIGA North American Teams, 28, 8, 7-8. After a hard game, in fact, Barney complains that he’s not getting much warm-up from this encounter.

If more heat is what he wanted, Guillermo obliged, taking first game four and then game five by identical 11-8 scores. Barney has “gone soft” playing a more conservative, less energetic backcourt game, fishing and lobbing. As his corner man Ben Johnson later points out, “It’s dangerous to back off your ‘A’ game. You may find it difficult to turn it back on, mid-match.”

Ben’s looking like Nostradamus as Munoz wins game six, also 11-8. Now Barney’s back to the wall, and after limiting Munoz to 5 points in three games is tied at 3 all. Guillermo is not about to give back the advantage he’s seized, and upsets Barney with a 15-13 win in the seventh.

That seemed to be a signal to everyone else in the RR that Upset Day had arrived. D beats B, as Qualifier Crystal Huang puts it to Shao Yu 10, 4, 9, 7-7, 9-9. Barney plays Shao, A vs. B, determined not to repeat his Munoz situation. Of course he immediately does. Dropping the first game at 9, Barney wins three in a row from the New Yorker, 8, 2, 7 to go up 3-1 one. But 11-7, 11-6 to Shao and it’s all tied up finally, 13-11 in the seventh, Reed turns Shao Yu away. Now Crystal plays Munoz. D vs. C, and naturally, after building a 2-1 lead, Guillermo loses to Crystal in seven games, 8, 5-3, 4, 10, 10, 5-9 for Huang. Barney takes Crystal on, and notches a 4-2 win that is going to be huge in the outcome, 6-6, 5-9, 6-6. Lastly, Guillermo uses six games to defeat Shao Yu. 9, 9-6, 9-9. Wow! When the smoke clears, Shao Yu, the B seed, is 0-3, and Reed, Munoz and Huang are tied with 2-1 match records. Game record between the tied players breaks the tie, and it’s Reed’s 7-6; Munoz, 7-7; Huang, 6-7. Barney and Guillermo advance, Crystal is disappointed and Shao asks “What the heck was THAT?”

Group Four
Nguyen, Li, Banh, Huang

Tawny Banh does her best to catch upset fever from Group Three, and she and Khoa go all the way to deuce in the seventh game. Spectators jaws are dropping as the match progresses and Tawny hangs with the redoubtable Khoa, but in the end, status quo survives and Khoa is 1-0 by scores of 8-7, 1-1, 8-8, 11. Yuanyuan Li, now residing in California, puts a 4-1 loss on the Qualifier, Jeff Huang. She’s determined against Khoa, perhaps inspired by Tawny’s effort, but 8-7, 9-8, 8-9, Khoa overcomes Li’s chip. It may not be an upset win, but it’s still a huge CHO! from Tawny Banh as she conquers Jeff Huang in seven games, 9-9, 9-8, 9, 7-5, 9. Khoa is 3-0 when he beats Jeff, and Li’s defeat due to injury to Tawny in their match gives her the second advancer’s position.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • January/February 2007 • 69
Quarterfinals
Ben Johnson vs. Stefan Feth

Ben's got an admirable game, not just to due to his skill, but also his indomitable fighting spirit. He lets it all hang out against the top seed, but 14,10,7,8; it's just not to be today. Ben is always quick to recover his good humor and reflects on a game point hanger that he missed. “I need to believe that I can win before I will win,” he observes. Stefan has such a skill set that it’s difficult to imagine going iii to face him believing that you’re the favorite, though. $125 for Mr. Johnson and Stefan advances to the Semis.

Guillermo Munoz vs. Khoa Nguyen

Munoz, the Over 40 Champion here, has brought a group of his students to the tournament. Support group or not, he's not able to overcome the graceful Nguyen, and is denied a comeback victory, 9,5,-10,-10,5,6 for Khoa. The gathering crowd applauds the fine effort and Khoa advances.

Benjamin J. Reed vs. Xavier Therien

I’ve seen in the past that Xavier is willing to let whole games pass as he finds his rhythm and explores his opponent’s game. A fast starter, he’s usually not. That’s my explanation for the game scores here as Xavier vanquishes Barney, 7-8, 8,7,9,8. Surprisingly, for these two very active players, it's their first meeting since August of 2004, when Xavier also racked a 4-1 victory.

Tawny Banh vs. Pradeeban Peter-Paul

Tawny “Mama Tiger” Banh is looking sharp in her new Yasaka colors, which do bear an uncanny resemblance to tiger stripes. Pradeeban, the great Canadian Champion, is, as always, looking ready for business. Highly energized and equipped with what Marco Borrillo describes as “one funky service game,” Pradeeban is able to deal with Tawny’s quick off-the-bounce block and hit approach. The final scores are 6,9,8,7 as Peter-Paul advances to the Semifinals.

Semifinals
Stefan Feth vs. Khoa Nguyen

There’s a certain dash and elan in a player’s body language when they are feeling ready to conquer the world, but you don’t see it here in Khoa. This pair last met in the Final of the Berkeley Open, where Stefan handed Khoa a 4-0 loss. It’s not a different result here in San Diego, either. When I ask Stefan to explain his dominance against this skilled opponent he responded this way: “Khoa plays a modern game, a topspin game. I feel like the ball is very comfortable and the pattern familiar. I very much like to play with him and if I focus and do not let down I can be the winner.” By scores of 5,6,3,8, Feth is the winner. Khoa is going to have to find either more fire or less predictable patterns before he can have his first victory over Feth. Here he gets a $300 check and a fine, warm appreciation from the fans.

Pradeeban Peter-Paul vs. Xavier Therien

Canadian teammates, practice partners, traveling companions, Praddy and Xavier meet in the Semis. Pradeeban is a fast worker, using his superior conditioning to pressure opponents into mistakes and keeping the pace hot. He has a wickedly powerful forehand and the ability to go backcourt and lob his opponents into exhaustion. Many a player has “whacked himself silly” trying to smash past him! But, in the words of Freddie Gabriel, “Xavier is playing out of his mind.” In an upset that has the hundreds of spectators buzzing in awe of the tense points and spectacular play; Xavier defeats Praddy in straight games, 7,6,9,6. There is no hint of any dump here, as Praddy manages a quick handshake and makes a quick exit to cool down, visibly disappointed. This is, to date, the finest match I have ever seen Xavier play.
the crowd’s interest, and despite their admiration for Stefan, they begin to cheer every point for the underdog. In my experience, this is nothing personal. Fans would love to see every match go deuce in the seventh game! Xavier moves a step closer when he notches short to Xavier's wide FH and then jumping all and he's able to generate some weak returns him moving Xavier in and out. back and forth, game five. 11-9 in drainatic fashion. But Feth's e'cry match go deuce in the seventh game! point for the undeldog. In my experience, this winner against the vastly improved Therien.

SoCal Open Champion. Stefan Feth, a 4-2 winner against the vastly improved Therien. coach. saying that Canada has placed. since gives credit for the improvement to his new so often and his losses so infrequently. Xavier people give him enough credit, his wins come admiration for Stefan, they begin to cheer every

USA Table Tennis Magazine • January/February 2007
Interview with Stellan Bengsston  
Nov. 22, 2006 • By Larry Hodges

Sweden's Stellan Bengsston, 1971 World Men's Singles Champion and one of the all-time great players, recently moved to San Diego.

Age/Date of Birth: 54/July 26, 1952
Hometown in Sweden: Falkenberg, Sweden
Current Hometown: San Diego, California
Current Club: San Diego Table Tennis Association

Best Titles as a Player
• 1971 World Men’s Singles Champion (youngest ever at age 18)
• 1973 World Men’s Doubles Champion (with Kjell Johansson)
• 1973 World Men’s Team Champion
• 7-time European Champion (1-time Singles, 1-time Doubles, 5-time Team)
• 24 medals at World and European Championships
• 65 International Titles in Singles, Doubles and Teams
• 25-times Swedish National Championships (7-times Singles)

Coaching Background
• 3 years ATSV Saarbrucken, Germany
• 2 years Super Donic Berlin, Germany
• 4 years Swedish National Team
• 5 years Danish National Team
• 15 years Falkenberg Table Tennis Club (FBTK)
• 1 year Aspire Sports Academy, Doha, Qatar

Many players he coached have won World/European/Swedish/German Championships. Of this, Stellan wrote, “I have been fortunate to have coached talented and ambitious players.”

How did you get started in table tennis?
I started to play in the basement where we lived in Falkenberg. After entering and winning a school tournament I started at the Falkenberg Club (FBTK). I concentrated only on table tennis from the age of 12 on. Before that I participated in a lot of different sports, Swedish football (soccer), wrestling, handball and table tennis.

How and where did you train as a junior, and how did you become a top player?
In Sweden, I always played for the same Club, Falkenberg. As a kid I played a lot. Every day. The club was always open and there were other players to play with. I was fortunate as a young player to have a very good coach, Allan Dahlgren. At 15, I won my first National Junior Championships. Because of that I was selected for the Swedish Men’s team to play in the World and European Championships in Lyon, France, in 1968. As a result, I was fortunate enough to sit on the bench and study Kjell Johansson and Hans Alser when they played, and that was a good experience. Sweden won the team event there.

The most important part of my development as a player occurred in the fall of 1969, at age 16, when I was able to train for three months in Japan with Mr. Ogimura, who became my mentor. He was 12-times World Champion and a pioneer of modern training in Sweden. That experience changed my life. Bo Persson and I stayed in Japan for 3 1/2 months. We played six hours a day, six days a week. I learned so much, and changed nearly every aspect of my game. I improved the technical, physical and mental parts of my game. A year and a half later I won the World Championships. I have been a professional player/coach since then.

What was a typical daily and weekly training schedule when you were training full-time? Who did you train with?
Depending on the season and the match schedule I played about 4-5 hours a day. I also did a lot of physical training, running and weights. The National team had a one-week camp every month. In the club I played with Ulf Carlsson, Anders Johansson and a lot of players that are unknown in the U.S. The National team was always very strong with players such as Kjell Johansson, Hans Alser, Mikael Appelgren, Erik Lindh, Ulf Thorsell, Ulf Bengtsson, Jorgen Persson, JO Waldner, etc.

If you could go back in time and say one thing to yourself as an up-and-coming player, what would you say?
Be the best you can every day.

What’s the most interesting thing that you’ve experienced in table tennis?
All the fantastic players that I played. I have played every Men’s Singles World Champion from 1961 to 1993. That has been awesome. So many exiting games, so many memories.

When did you retire as a player, and what have you been doing since then?
My playing career ended in 1985. I have been coaching since then. It has been a dream come true.

You recently moved to San Diego. What was the reason for the move?
My wife Angie has been living in Sweden many years. We thought it would be interesting to live in the U.S. Angie has a big family here. And we have children and two grandsons here, and one son studying in Stockholm, Sweden.

What are your upcoming plans and goals in the U.S.?
We want to spread our knowledge to players/coaches. It would be nice to have a squad of young players that like to play and learn. To continue to work professionally as coaches.

Do you have any suggestions on how to make table tennis “big” in the U.S.?
Table Tennis is a great sport. It seems that many people play here. Everybody in table tennis should work together for the best of the sport. I’d like to increase the knowledge all over the country. Create a team that can compete at the World level. Have a positive spirit that spreads through the country. More training camps where the best of every age group practice with each other. Send players out to play more internationally. Put up more tables in the rec. centers/schools to make the sport available to more people. Find good athletes for our sport.

Is anyone else in your family involved with table tennis? (Hi Angie!)
Of course, my wife Angie is one of the best American female players of all time. [Editor’s note: Angie was inducted into the U.S. Table Tennis Hall of Fame in 1996.] My sons played a short while but they didn’t really like it.
What do you do these days when you are not playing table tennis? Hobbies, sports, music, school, etc.? Any other interests outside table tennis?
I love music, there are so many artists that I like from the USA. It is so cool with all the concerts in San Diego, I have already been to quite a few. Another thing I really enjoy doing is cooking for family and friends. The variety of food in southern California is fantastic. I also read a lot. I am lucky to have my hobby as work.

Any tips for up-and-coming players?
Play as much as you can. Enjoy the game. Find a good coach. Try to get technique with YOUR style. Try to practice and play a lot of matches with better players. Always try to improve your game. Look at world-class players and learn. Don’t be too happy if you play well, prepare for the next match.

Anything else interesting to add?
It feels really nice and inspiring to be in the USA. I can’t wait to go out to the clubs all over the country and coach. I have already seen some good talents in San Diego who will hopefully continue to improve and play well for the USA.

Junior of the Month: John Leach
By Wallace Liu

Age/DOB: 17/April 26, 1989
Hometown: Erie, Colorado
Style: Two-winged looper
Sponsor: Butterfly
Equipment: Timo Boll Spirit, Bryce (x2)
Current/Highest Rating: 2331/2354

One of the more impressive yet overlooked stories in American table tennis is the development of John Leach, a Colorado native whose quiet growth demonstrates the value of sustained, sincere effort. John has maintained steady improvement of his entire career, as evidenced by his rating progression, constant and free of fluctuation. Though not as hyped as some of his peers, this consistency has solidified John as one of the top juniors in the country.

In his first year on the national junior team after three years as a cadet member, John already has extensive international experience. He has trained in the prestigious Angby Sport Club in Stockholm, Sweden, as well as the Butterfly Dojo in Tokyo. He has competed in several ITTF World Junior Circuit events, the 2004 Cadet World Championships, and a few ITTF Pro Tour competitions. John aims to further prove himself by playing well in the World Junior Championships in December, then making another successful run with the junior team in 2007.

John started table tennis at eight years of age, when his father Chris bought a table for the family’s garage. Since then, John has taken advantage of his opportunities to train, considering them “a great blessing” which he “can’t pass up lightly.” His commitment is driven by the prospect of improvement, and the satisfaction he gets from being better and playing at a higher level. He enjoys the fitness, coordination, and tactics involved, which continuously challenge him. Currently, John trains with Chris, national team member Nan Li, as well as Li’s parents. His training takes place mostly in his garage and at the Aurora Table Tennis Club.

With his hard work, John has developed a solid looping style with both wings. He is noted more, however, for his creative and effective services. He is still looking to improve in all aspects of his game, especially returning serves. While he does not model his game after a specific player, John admires the stable Vladimir Samsonov, the “amazing” Petr Korbel, and the legendary Mikael Appelgren, whom he met in Angby.

For his success in table tennis, John credits foremost his family, who have provided him with ample opportunity and support. He is also proud yet grateful for his chance to represent the United States, along with his great teammates.

Beyond table tennis, John enjoys playing pickup games of Ultimate Frisbee, as well as tennis during the summer. He plans on attending a university after completing high school, and afterwards pursuing a fulfilling life; namely, “fall in love, marry, and have a family.”
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There is a certain quality to the movements of a professional athlete of any sport that lets even completely uninitiated spectators recognize that they’re watching world-class performance. Be it the ball handling of a basketball player, the footwork of a badminton player or the stroke of a modern billiards player. They all share a similar smoothness, a confidence in the precision of their muscular control that lends honesty to their surprised expression, when they miss.

When we are really immersed in a sport, we start recognizing differences within those perfected movements resulting from differing training methods and philosophies. Almost like their own language, training systems from some countries leave a clearly identifiable effect on their players. When I first saw the Mazunov brothers, I immediately recognized the distinct clarity in motion that is the hallmark of Russian sports. The discipline of practicing certain stroke combinations hundreds of times beyond what others can stand, resulted in beautifully silky, yet explosive strokes, which, combined with uncanny physical precision and astonishing endurance, has produced a number of players, with whom no one wants to get drawn into an extended rally. Among them is Alexei Smirnov, currently ranked #23 in the world.

Curious to find out how Smirnov developed into such a dangerous player, we watched him at practice. We were lucky to see him do a drill that requires a perfected game to even make it past the second repetition. He did twenty repetitions with ease. The drill is looping from the forehand and the backhand with the ball placed to the middle. And we’re not talking safe little pitty-patty shots, but each one performed with a firmness that reverberated through the hall and knocked the blocker’s racket visibly backward. To sustain this drill, the footwork must be perfect and the timing must be absolutely precise; otherwise it is impossible to maintain one’s balance, and the third or fourth shot will go awry. Smirnov takes the ball very early off the bounce, which adds to the degree of difficulty, and he produces an equally severe ball from both sides — qualities that fit the modern game perfectly. In this drill, the transition from forehand to backhand is much more difficult than the reverse, because it requires somewhat of a backward movement.

The picture sequence starts at the end of a backhand stroke. While he pulls his arm backward, Smirnov hops to his left, lifting both feet off the ground, but his head remains almost stationary (1-2). After setting his feet, he bends down low to prepare his forehand stroke (3-4). As he loops the ball, both feet come off the ground again and his whole body turns to the left. The thrust from his legs helps lift the ball and drive it forward (5). Now comes the more difficult movement, the imprecise execution of which often causes this drill to fall apart. After landing, Smirnov immediately takes a preliminary set-up hop to his left and widens his stance (6-8). With the weight resting fully on his left leg, he drops the right shoulder, and as he loops the ball, he pushes off strongly again, lifting both feet off the ground (9-10).

Another factor that allows this sequence to flow is his early adjustment of the racket angle to match his next stroke. Before he even lowers his hand from the follow-through, he turns the racket in (6-7), and even more clearly in (11-12).

It is noteworthy that this sequence is taken from deep into a drill set, after Smirnov has already done four or five repetitions. Still, his form is impeccable, and that is the key to his ability to keep going. In a rally, that translates into constant pressure on the opponent to produce a high-quality shot, otherwise Smirnov ends the point.
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When trying this drill, you must be realistic in assessing your capabilities to avoid frustration. You will clearly notice where your weakness lies, because you will probably derail at a similar point when trying many repetitions. But you must try it, because you have to learn what needs to be fixed, and few drills will uncover that spot as easily as this one. Eventually, you want to play at a level where you can sustain a rally with authority, and you can only do that when this works. Initially don’t be embarrassed to make the loops slow and safe – you need to be able to walk before you can run. Going through it slowly will engrain the sequence of motion, and with repetition, you will be able to build power. You will learn the comforting feeling of knowing – while watching your opponent struggle and miss – that you would have been ready for your next shot.
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- BUTTERFLY SIGMA
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- DOUBLE HAPPINESS Hurricane 31
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- STIGA ALMANA
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When blocking make sure you angle the return wherever possible. The difference between a block that goes off the end of the table and one that goes to the side of the table is quite major.

Blocking a little wider will often force your opponent to take an extra step in either direction to continue their attack.

Blocking into their transition point (forehand to backhand) can yield many errors also.

When a ball is considerably out of your comfort range, what do you do? From observation, I would say that many players try to overpower the ball back onto the table, even though they are very unlikely to land the shot. Instead of this, it would be better for you just to passively get the ball back on the table. Every shot that lands on your opponent’s side forces your opponent to have to hit another shot. This increases their chance of missing or making a mistake, and your chance of winning the point.

The other part of the problem is that I just don’t move over far enough. The most important thing about when balls come to the middle of the table is to get ready to put all your weight into the move. I have to move over far enough and hit the ball into the backhand, making sure that I lead my footwork (especially my back foot) and my body around. This also allows me to get the ball back when needed. For me, it’s the problem of the back foot that holds me up in the middle of the table. So, I need to move my body more, my weight more, and my footwork more.

When a ball is outside your comfort range and lands near your waist, you have to remember it is my waist that tells me where I have to move. Sometimes, when I hit the ball to an area of the table that is uncomfortable, I don’t go far enough. This is because of the indentation of the waist. I try to make sure I get the ball back when needed around. I need to get my waist off of the ball and try to hit the ball to where my waist is not going to be a factor anymore. When I go out of the waist, I am moving my waist, and I am moving my footwork. This is a hard thing to remember when the ball is high up.
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- Memory storage that can store up to 99 separate routines.
- Adjustable height that allows balls to shoot from different trajectories.
- Side mount is now included (save $81.99).
- One gross of 40mm Butterfly 3-Star balls (save $179.99).
- Ball Amigo (save $19.99).
- Price includes freight charges (save $$$).
- Operators manual in plan and easy to read English. (you save hours).
- Most replacement parts in stock so there is no waiting on an international shipment to clear customs (you save weeks).
- North America's only factory certified technician to answer all of your questions and repair needs (invaluable).

![Butterfly Amicus 3000 Plus](image)

- 2 YEAR WARRANTY
- BALL AMIGO
- 144 3-STAR BALLS
- Adjustable Neck
- Ball Placement Guide
- Collection Net/Remote Switch
- Side Mount Kit