DAVID ZHUANG WINS HIS USN’S US Men’s Singles Title

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DAVID ZHUANG WINS HIS 5TH US Men’s Singles Title

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Judy Hugh

At the 2006 US Nationals, STIGA-sponsored Judy Hugh played great. She won the Under 2400 singles, defended her #1 spot on the U.S. Junior Girls Team, and played the most exciting match in Women's Singles, going seven games with two-time U.S. Olympian Tawny Bank. The match had each spectator on the edge of their seat on every point. While Judy came up two points short, she left the arena knowing she stood toe-to-toe with the strongest fighter on our national team. After the Women's Singles final, Judy was presented with the ITTF's Swaythling Club's Universal Fair Play Prize for the best sporting behavior by a player in national competition.

Justen Yao

At the 2006 World Cadet Challenge, STIGA-sponsored Justen Yao was awarded the ITTF Fair Play Award. As a young cadet on a four-player North American team, he didn't get the playing time he had hoped for, but that didn't change his champion's attitude to support his team, nor prevent him from making the most of his opportunities when they presented themselves. Justen's actions on and off the table were a model for all the young players, and were the reason that the international coaches at the event selected him for this prestigious award. It is this very attitude that also helped Justen win the 2006 US Cadet Trials in Las Vegas for a second time.

We at STIGA and THE TABLE TENNIS PIONEERS salute Judy and Justen for their outstanding play, their outstanding sportsmanship, and for keeping the STIGA fair play spirit alive.

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## On the Cover:

- **David Zhuang and Wang Chen**  
- Photos by Kingston Gee ©2006; Cover Design by Tom Nguyen

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Handles: flared, anatomic, straight

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**PATRICK BAUM**
World Junior Singles Champion 2005, German TOP 12 Winner 2005 Men's Singles

**DIMA OVTCHAROV**

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Editor's Report

By Larry Hodges

Dear USATT Members,

I've greatly enjoyed my years as Editor of USA Table Tennis Magazine and USATT League & Club Programs Director. I've worked for USATT for 16 years in three stints (1986-1990, 1991-95, 1999-present). However, after 71 issues of the magazine, I've decided I need a change. I will be resigning my USATT positions upon completion of this issue.

I will be helping out in the transition, and have put together a lengthy document outlining my responsibilities, covering every aspect of putting the magazine together as well as my other duties. Until further notice, all magazine materials should go to USATT Executive Director Doru Gheorghe at USATT, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909, ed@usatt.org.

I've been a part-time science fiction writer for many years (member, SFWA), with a number of short story sales. I plan to devote the next two years to writing at least two science fiction novels. I tried doing so while doing my USATT work, but the hours are long and there are way too many distractions — both from well-meaning people working to develop the sport (good!) and from the constant bickering and fighting that often permeates USATT, sapping the energy and making writing on the side nearly impossible. (To those of you who are working hard to develop our sport, remember this: “Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.” — Albert Einstein.)

Ultimately, it wasn’t a matter of whether I should take two years off to write these novels, living off savings; it was a matter of knowing how much I’d regret it if I didn’t.

I do believe table tennis has huge potential in this country, if developed at the club level with a focus on developing programs for current and potential players, primarily through junior programs, beginning classes, training programs and leagues. USATT has always been split among several factions with differing views on what USATT’s goals should be, and I haven’t been particularly successful in convincing others of my Vision: “Hundreds of professional clubs with junior & adult training programs, beginning classes and leagues; thousands of recreational clubs with leagues or training programs; and hundreds of thousands playing in these leagues and training programs.” (I’ve just described table tennis in Europe and Asia!) However, the USATT League is a big step forward; also needed is the development of a large core group of coaches trained to develop the needed coaching programs and clubs.

Who knows, maybe in a couple of years I’ll be back! Until then, I will be writing SF full-time, perhaps coaching some at the MDTTCC, and may even return to the tournament scene as a player.

USATT Elections

Jiing Wang, Barney D. Reed and George Braithwaite were reelected to their present USATT Board positions while Ed Hogshead became the new Treasurer. The 950 votes cast represent about 12% of the total who were eligible to vote, which is a lower vote total than in past elections. This low total is probably due in part to the compressed time frame for the election. The Nominating/Elections committee will be considering ways to increase voter participation in future elections.

Executive Vice President

Jiing Wang 452
Tahl Leibovitz 259
Lim Ming Chui 211
Write-in votes: Larry Rose 2, David Dickson 1, Keith Tademy 1

Treasurer

Ed Hogshead 438
Grant Misbach 271
Santos Shih 203
Write-in votes: David Marcus 1, Marty Reisman 1, Keith Tademy 1

Vice President at Large (2 spots)

Barney D. Reed 459
George Braithwaite 434
Henry McCollum 419
Keith Tademy 204

National Athlete Elections

Khoa Nguyen and Whitney Ping, the two incumbents, were both reelected as Athlete Representatives to the USATT Board.

Male Athlete

Khoa Nguyen 7
Han Xiao 4
Barney J. Reed 1
Write-in vote: Keith Alban 1

Female Athlete

Whitney Ping 12
Write-in vote: Jasna Reed 1

USATT Players and Teams of the Year

(As selected by USATT Board of Directors)

Team of the Year: USA Women’s Team
Paralympian of the Year: Tahl Leibovitz
Sportsman of the Year: Tahl Leibovitz
Sportswomen of the Year: Gao Jun

Corrections

In the last issue, in the interview with Stellan Bengtsson, his last name was repeatedly misspelled “Bengtsson.” Stellan said that “this has always been an American mistake” that he is used to. From now on, we’ll get it right!

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They Said It...

By Larry Hodges

"This is a ping-pong game with American lives." Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Nebraska) of the troop surge in Iraq, in speech to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Jan. 24, 2007.

"Ten years ago, when I was 1900, I asked a 2500 player to give a reason why he was 2500. We did an experiment. He asked me to serve 10 times, and he would push it back and but wouldn't tell me where. He asked me to just loop the push. I think I made 3 or 4 out of 10. Then he served and I pushed 10 times. He didn't miss one loop. He said that's why he's 2500. Tahl Leibovitz, 2006 USATT Male Player of the Year.

"The latest dinosaur species named by University of Alberta scientists didn't come from a recent, painstakingly coordinated excavation. Its bones were found in boxes stowed away under a ping-pong table... Scientists are affectionately referring to the newly-named dinosaur as the 'Ping Pong Ichthyosaur.' The bones of the 100-million-year-old new species of Ichthyosaur from the Lower Cretaceous had been stored in a box under the ping-pong table at the University of Alberta for 25 years and only recently rediscovered, and given the more scientific name of Maiaspondylus lindoei. From online Discovery Channel, Sept. 22, 2006.

"Happy Days is my favorite theme song... I could sure kick your butt in a game of ping pong." A line from parody singer "Weird Al" Yankovic's new album, "White and Nerdy." Contributed by Mike Meier.

"Picturing his medals in some dirty garbage bin made Jiang very, very sad." Wu Dong, attorney for 1983 & 1985 World Men's Singles Champion Jiang Jialiang of China. A robber broke into Jiang's luxury apartment in Shanghai on Aug. 16, 2006, and stole six of his championship medals, as well as jewelry that his wife, Wu Yufang, wore when she won China's National Best Actress Award in 1985. The thief was caught and some of the jewelry recovered, but the thief said he threw away the medals because they were not made of real gold, and could not remember where they were. Jiang is suing the company that manages his apartment complex.

"When it's 9-all, balls that hit earlier always go two inches off." Han Xiao, USA Men's Doubles Champion and Singles Quarterfinalist.

"They have 15 million players registered in their high school table tennis championships." What the Chinese coach told USA Coach Houshang Bozorgzadeh at the World Junior Championships, when asked why the Chinese continue to be so good.

Club of the Month: North East Alabama TTC

By Michael S. Harris

The North East Alabama Table Tennis club was sanctioned by USATT in April 2005. We are a new club and anxious to become one of the stronger clubs in Alabama. Our club hosted the Alabama State Championships in 2004 and 2005, the first ever Alabama State Team and Hardbat Championships in 2006, and we also run the non-sanctioned Traveling Trophy Tournament. We hope the Teams and Hardbat will become an annual event here at our club in Anniston.

The NEATT club's objective is for the encouragement and promotion of the sport of table tennis in Alabama and the Calhoun County area as a wholesome form of physical recreation and competition. It is our desire for everyone to have fun and fellowship as a member and grow the sport we all love.

As a club we are fortunate to have a great facility to play in at the Anniston Army Depot's physical fitness center. Anniston Army Depot is a Department of Defense facility where Army combat vehicles are maintained for Operation Iraqi Freedom. We have ten Butterfly Centerfold tables, two Stiga Prestige tables, one Stiga Elite table, a Newgy Robot, excellent lighting, air conditioning, hard wood floors and navy blue walls to contrast with the ball color; which all add up to a great atmosphere to play and compete.

The club has players that range in rating from 500 to 2000 and we also have two Paralympics players. We play on Tuesday (4-9 p.m.) and Saturday (12-4 p.m.) all year long. The club also has a Ladder Competition.

It is our sincere desire to extend a special word of thanks to the Anniston Army Depot for their continued support of our club and the sport of table tennis state-wide. We would love for you to stop by and see what our club has to offer and also visit our club's website at www.neatt.us for directions and more information on the club.
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USATT National Coach of the Year
Dan Seemiller

His devotion to the sport insures a bright future for his students, especially some of his current most promising ones: Mark Hazinski, Joe Cochran, AJ Brewer, CJ Brewer and Dan Seemiller, Jr., who all have future Olympic aspirations. Here are highlights of two of them:

• Mark Hazinski – 2004 Olympian in Doubles; 2003 & 2004 USA Nationals Men's Singles Runner-up, 2006 Under 21 Men's Singles National Champion; member of 2006 USA National Team; accepted full table tennis scholarship at Texas Wesleyan University in 2006.

• AJ Brewer – At age 13 qualified for the 2007 USA Cadet team for the second year in a row; won Under 15 & Under 18 Boys' Singles at USA Nationals.

USATT Developmental Coach of the Year
Hui Yuan Liu

Coach Liu runs a table tennis club opened seven days a week from 1:00pm to 11:30pm. At his club he encourages all to participate, enjoy the game and maximize their potential.

He currently trains many students of different ages and levels. His top students include Stephanie Shih, a member of the USA Junior Girls' Team. He also trains Kaz Yokoyama (2561, rated #8 in U.S.) and Shao Yu (rated 2509, #12 in U.S.). His junior training program has 20 members.

USATT Volunteer Coach of the Year
Michael J. Scott

Dr. Scott has been a volunteer coach for over 30 years at Seattle University and at Seattle Central Community College. At Seattle University he taught Table Tennis Physical Education courses for credit and also assists in such courses at Seattle Central Community College.

He was able to obtain Varsity Letters for Table Tennis Team members at Seattle University. At no time has Dr. Scott accepted any remuneration for his services.

He not only coaches students the fundamentals of the sport but he stresses the importance of physical exercise and how table tennis is a lifetime sport.

"DOC" Counselman Science Award
Larry Thoman

Larry is the author of a coaching manual on table tennis that teaches readers how to develop and improve their table tennis skills through the use of table tennis robots. In 2006, the third revision to his manual was published with updates for new techniques. A significant technological attribute of the manual is the use of stroboscopic pictures to better illustrate table tennis strokes.

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Dear USATT Members,

At the beginning of a new year, it is our pleasure to inform you briefly about USATT activities, programs and services provided to its members in 2006. USATT promotes table tennis participation and the development of table tennis athletes’ skills at all levels through programs for table tennis coaches and officials.

The 2006 USATT Board of Directors were the following:

Sheri Soderberg Pittman  President
Jing T. Wang  Executive Vice President
Tong Lee  Treasurer
Tim Bogdan  Secretary
George Braithwaite  Vice President
Barney Reed  Vice President
Robert Blackwell  Vice President
Lily Yip  Vice President
Dell Sweres  Vice President & Foundation Representative
Willy Leparulo*  Community Based Program Representative
Ashu Jain  Olympic Athlete Representative
Whitney Ping  National Athlete Representative
Khoa Nguyen  National Athlete representative

Teodor “Doru” Gheorghe** USATT Executive Director
* Replaced by Joseph Wells
** Ex-officio member

USATT, through its Nominating/Election Committee, conducted an election for the following six Board positions whose term was expiring: Executive Vice-President, Treasurer, two Vice-Presidents-at-large and two National Athlete Representatives. The elections resulted in three incumbents being re-elected and in Ed Hogshead replacing Tong Lee who did not seek re-election. In addition, President Sheri Pittman nominated Joseph Wells to replace Willy Leparulo as the Community Based Program Representative.

USATT would like to summarize its activities and services provided to its members in 2006.

USATT Coaching Certification System – Ongoing process for certification and education of US coaches. USATT members, fulfilling the criteria listed on the USATT webpage, could become a certified coach and then advance to the next coaching level. The certified coaches help teach the young kids and members of all ages the necessary skills to become good players and get in good physical shape. As of December 31, 2006 USATT has 400 active coaches.

USATT held three coaching seminars:
• Coaching seminar – Open to all coaches from US – Charlotte, NC, July 7, 2006
• Coaching seminar – Open to all coaches from US – Colorado Springs, CO, October 20-22, 2006
• Coaching seminar – Open to all coaches from US – Las Vegas, NV, December 15, 2006

USATT Officials – Ongoing process for certification and education of US umpires and referees was conducted by the Rules and Officials Committee. Any USATT members that fulfill the criteria could become a certified umpire and then receive training and take an exam to become a certified referee. USATT has 264 active Umpires, including 39 International Umpires, 46 certified Referees, 8 National and 8 International.

USATT sanctioned 282 tournaments during 2006 within the United States – Tournaments were sanctioned by the Tournament Committee through the Regional Tournament Coordinators. These tournaments were open to all members and contained events for all ages and levels. The tournaments were organized according to USATT standards, under tournament director coordination and following the International Table Tennis Federation laws. USATT set the sanctioning star level and certified umpires/officials for the tournaments, and processed the ratings of each participant.

USA Table Tennis Magazine – Bimonthly magazine issued by our organization containing information related to table tennis activities in the USA and around the world, including coaching articles, physical training, ideas to improve the game, player profiles, interviews, tournament coverage and other info related to the sport. The magazines were sent to all USATT members.

USATT Web Page – Maintained and updated on a weekly basis the USATT web page in order to keep members informed about all aspects of table tennis activities in the US such as: schedule and results of sanctioned tournaments, ratings (updated weekly), news from the ITTF, USOC, coaching seminars, clubs and programs throughout the country, officials and umpires listings, national teams news, and other info related to table tennis activities in the US and the world.

National Teams – In 2006 USATT Men’s & Women’s, Cadet & Junior Boys’ and Girls’ National Team participated in the following international competitions and training camps:

Women’s and Men’s National Teams: Gao Jun, Jasna Reed, Nan Li, Crystal Huang, Jackie Lee, Iljia Lupulesku, Mark Hazinski, Adam Hugh, Barney Reed and Darko Rop.
• Training camp, Hamburg, Germany
• World Championships, Bremen, Germany
• North American Championships, Rochester, MN
• Women’s World Cup, China.

National Junior and Cadet Teams: Judy Hugh, Atha Fong, Stephanie Shih, Barbara Wei, Olena Sowers, Ariel Hsing, Alicia Wei, Amy Huang, Adam Hugh, John Leach, Trevor Runyan, Misha Kazantsev, Joseph Cochran, Justen Yao, Amaresh Sahu, A.J. Brewer, and Joseph Wang.
• North American Championships, Rochester, MN.
• Two NATT Women’s Developmental training camp and participation in Canada Cup.
• Two-week summer training camp, Texas Wesleyan University, TX.
• Two-week summer training camp, China.
• China World Junior Circuit, China.
• World Cadet Challenge Cup, Vrsac, Serbia.
• World Junior Championships, Cairo, Egypt.
• Canadian ITTF WJC (cadets & juniors) and junior training camp, Canada.
• US Open Teams, Reno, NV.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • March/April 2007
Competition Organized by USATT

In 2006 USATT organized the following competitions:

- US Open - Charlotte, NC, July – 500 participants – open to all USATT and ITTF members.
- US Open Teams - Reno, NV, March.
- Junior Olympics’ Junior Nationals - for players under age 22.
- US National Championships - Las Vegas - 888 participants – open to all USATT members.
- US Open Paralympics Table Tennis Championships, Las Vegas.
- US National Team Trials (junior girls, cadet boys and girls), Las Vegas.

Regional Training Centers

Two Regional training centers, New York International training center and Washington Table Tennis Club, were opened in order to help the local young kids to develop and improve their game. However, due to funding cuts by USOC, the program was discontinued in 2007.

2007 US National Team members

Junior Girls: Judy Hugh, Olena Sowers, Atza Fong, Stephanie Shih.
Cadet Girls: Ariel Hsing, Lily Zhang, Alicia Wei, Janice Lan.
Cadet Boys: Justen Yao, Marcus Jackson, A.J. Brewer, Peter Li.
The Trials for Pan-Am/National Women’s and Men’s Team will be held February 28 - March 3, 2007. Gao Jun, by virtue of her World ranking as of January 2007, qualified as a Pan-Am/National Team member.
Junior Boy’s: The Trials for the Junior Boy’s Team will be held on February 27, 2007 and the team will be decided at that time.

2006 Athletes and Team of the Year

The Elite Athlete Committee proposed and the Board of Directors voted the following Athletes and Team for these awards:

Sportswoman of the Year: Gao Jun
- Slovenian ITTF Pro Tour - WD - semifinalist
- Croatian ITTF Pro Tour - WS - semifinalist
- Korean ITTF Pro Tour - WD - semifinalist, WS - QF
- Chinese Taipei ITTF Pro Tour - WS & WD - QF
- Volkswagen China Open - WD - semifinalist
- Panasonic China Open - WD - Winner
- Japan ITTF Pro Tour - WS - QF
- Women’s World Cup - 9-12 place
- German ITTF Pro Tour - WD - semifinalist; WS - QF
- ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals - Finalist in WD
- ITTF World ranking as of Dec. 1, 2006 - #11

Sportsman and Paralympian of the Year: Tahl Leibovitz
- World Championships, Open Division - 4th
- World Championships, Class 9 - 5th
- German Open, Open Division - Champion
- German Open, Class 9 - Champion
- World Cup Singles - 9th
- Current World Ranking, Class 9 - #2
- Current World Ranking, Open Division #6

Team of the Year:
US Women’s Team ranked 7 as of November 2006 ITTF World ranking.

US Collegiate Table Tennis

Although the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association is not affiliated with USATT, for the purpose of helping to promote collegiate table tennis, USATT provided some financial and administrative support to collegiate programs in 2006, including:
- The US Collegiate Team to the World University Table Tennis Championships in Slovenia;
- The ACUI Collegiate Championships in Ft. Worth, TX.

Finally, I would like to thank all USATT members, volunteers, staff, Board members, officials, sponsors and last but not least the USOC, for supporting the development of table tennis in the USA.
Senior Corner
By Olga & Stan Kahan,
USATT Senior Committee Co-Chairs
949-830-6699 (ph) · 949-240-7157 (fax)
natashafeingold@gmail.com

That time is rolling around again when a young man’s fancy turns to Spring and the mature person’s fancy turns to be ready to spring into the $16,000 Meiklejohn North American Seniors Table Tennis Tournament in Southern California. The Meiklejohn tournament holds 33 different events including the only event for those over 90. Oscar Beckerman, a former silver medalist from 2002, just turned 95 this year, and awaits till corners, as long as they are over 100. He still plays every morning, it is “his job” he tells us, and he plays every day but Sunday. Evidently, he needs to recharge his batteries.

That reminds us of two incidents at the recent U.S. National Championships. Bill Neely from Tennessee, aged 73, was engaged with a ten-year-old girl in the Under 1800 event. The young lady’s head barely reached the top of the table. After spotting her 63 years, Bill “easily won,” 13-11 in the final game of a five-game match. “Whew,” said Bill. “I hope I don’t have to play her next year when she becomes eleven.” On hearing this news, Ivan Slade from California, just turned 90, scoffed. Once ranked seventeenth in the world in the 1930s, he was one of the ten-year-old’s opponents.

Costa Mesa, California resident Ragnar Fahlstrom, who is approaching his 70th this year, has made table tennis a lifetime “occupation.” Like this little ten-year-old girl from the last U.S. Nationals, Las Vegas, Ragnar, a member of the California Table Tennis Hall of Fame, started playing table tennis in grammar school in Sweden. During the lengthy cold Scandinavian winters, he became engrossed in his after-school activities and started playing table tennis in his native land at the young age of 12. He learned to play by attending various clubs and youth leagues. In his young adult years, Fahlstrom trained as an engineer, spent a year in Sweden’s air force and worked for his father’s company, which manufactured grinding stones.

In 1963, Ragnar was invited to a wedding in Los Angeles. At that time, he was one of the fifteen best table tennis players in Sweden. However, Fate changed his course of action after that wedding when he visited his aunt, in San Diego, where he remained. Ragnar became a SDTTA member, four years after the club had been formed, which at that time was the largest in the USA, with 1500 members.

Winning the 1964 and 1967 Pacific Coast Open Men’s Singles was a highlight to remember for the handsome Swede. Ragnar is proud to have reached the final in over 100 tournaments around the world. He has competed in several World Veterans Table Tennis Championships, including ones in Yugoslavia, USA, Ireland, Australia, Norway, Switzerland, etc.

In October 2006 he won three gold medals at the Huntsman World Senior Games, as well as Men’s Doubles in the 65-69 age group at the Nevada State Games with his partner from Sweden, Ralf Eklof.

Fahlstrom emphasizes that table tennis is “absolutely” beneficial for seniors and particularly for his personal health. He wants to play “as long as he can.” Like the 95-year-old Oscar Beckerman, Ragnar sees table tennis as part of his life – his “job.”

We wish them both and other seniors good health, great stamina, and enthusiastic pleasure in the years to come!

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Brooklyn Table Tennis Club
1100 Coney Island Ave. Between H Ave. & Foster Ave.
Contact: Nison Aronov 718-421-2200 / 917-239-0398

- 9 STIGA Tables
- Newgy Robot
- Equipment Pro-Shop
- Air-conditioned/Heated
- Shower Facilities
- League Tournaments:
  - Thursday at 8:00 p.m.
  - Sunday at 11:00 a.m.
- Great Prizes & Awards
- Personal Lessons
- World Class Competition
- Largest Club in NYC Area
- Sanctioned Tournaments: Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 11, Apr 22, May 13, Jun 17
- League Tournaments for Kids under 15 every Saturday at 10:30

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Website: www.myjavaserver.com/server/nisonaronov.BTTCA

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Prizes and Trophies for Winners
**Maryland Table Tennis Center**

18761-Q Frederick Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20879 • (301) 519-8580 • www.mdttc.com

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**TRAINING CAMP DATES:**

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**DAILY SCHEDULE** (Summer Camps)

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

**FEE**
- $250 (MDTTC members: $220)
- Minimum deposit: $50
- Make checks out to MDTTC
- Enter Early! Only first 30 players are guaranteed spots!

**HOUSING**
- Holiday Inn, 301-948-8900
  One mile away, at the intersection of Frederick Rd. and Montgomery Village Ave.
  Free HBO, CNN, ESPN, coffee
  *Mention “Table Tennis” for best rate.*

**Camps are primarily junior camps, but adults are welcome as well.**

**COACH CHENG YINGHUA**
- 4-time U.S. Men's Singles Champion
- Member, USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame
- 2000 Olympic Team Member
- #1 Ranked U.S. Player for most of the past 16 years
- Former Head Coach for the Szechuan Province of China
- Chinese National Team, 1977-87
- 1985 & 1993 U.S. Open Men's Champion
- USATT's Coach of the Year, 1996
- Butterfly-sponsored full-time coach
- Certified by USATT as a National Coach

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

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

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

**Name:**

**Phone:**

**Age/DOB:**

**Address:**

**Rating:**

**Amount Enclosed:** $ 

**Camps Attending:**

*Butterfly*
Ping-Pong Diplomacy, College Style
Peking University comes to Princeton • By Volker Schröder

A rare opportunity for international collegiate table tennis competition materialized on December 2, when the Peking University Founder Table Tennis Club visited Princeton University as part of its goodwill (and fundraising) tour through the United States. The twelve-day tour had begun on Thanksgiving weekend at the Baltimore Teams Championships where PKU’s coed teams achieved impressive success, reaching the final of the Elite Division and winning Division 2. After performing exhibitions at the Maryland Table Tennis Center, the United Nations in New York, Wellesley College in Massachusetts, and the Lower Naugatuck Valley TTC in Connecticut, the Chinese delegation came to New Jersey for a unique “friendship match” against an American college team. The emphasis was on “friendship,” and it was clear in advance that even Princeton’s current high-caliber college team. The atmosphere of a match was that of the high-caliber squad, runner-up at the 2006 NCTTA Nationals, and supplemented on this occasion by prospective students Judy Hugh and Alden Fan, would not present much of a challenge to the visitors, whose roster included several former China National Team members and, following the Baltimore tournament, boasted an average rating of 2500.

Still, two Princeton players came out victorious: junior Pan Lin (born and raised in Beijing) beat 2450-rated Shi Shengnan in a well-fought match, and sophomore Adam Hugh defeated former multiple world champion (now coach and professor) Liang Geliang in a crowd-pleasing showdown between the generations. Regardless of the results, the excellent sport on display throughout the morning was eagerly enjoyed and applauded by the 150 invited spectators, among whom were many “Beida” alumni (that’s the Chinese abbreviated name for PKU) living in and around Princeton.

After the matches, the undergraduates from both schools mingled, shared their athletic and academic perspectives, and exchanged email addresses to cultivate the relations established through this brief but enjoyable encounter. Indeed, while the event did not fail to evoke the spirit of the 1971-72 “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” (as well as memories of the 1981 U.S. Open, held at Princeton and dominated by China), its main aim was to look forward to the future — first and foremost to the 2008 Olympics, when the table tennis competition will be hosted by Peking University in its new, 8000-seat gymnasium.

Addendum:
By Diego Schaaf

On their way home, the Peking University Team stopped by in Los Angeles for a friendship match against the “Los Angeles All Stars,” which was co-organized by the Peking University Alumni Association and the Westside Table Tennis Club. The match was held at Westside TTC in Los Angeles on Sunday, Dec. 3, and was attended by an enthusiastic crowd of about 300 spectators.

Visitors and host fielded two three-player teams each and played two team matches in the old nine-match World Championship format. The competition level was of the highest caliber, and the event embodied the very essence of a friendship match: hard-fought matches on the court, with nothing at stake but the match itself. It was table tennis at its best and everyone left with a big smile on their face.

PKU A (Gao Xi, Ding Ying and Zhou Zheng Qing) defeated Los Angeles A (Mishra Kazantsev, Ben Johnson and John Thach Tran) 5-1, and Los Angeles B (Tawny Banh, Jeff Huang and Lee Soo Yeon) defeated PKU B (Lu Jiahui, Shi Shengnan and Wang Ye) 5-3.

For complete results and pictures go to www.alphatabletennis.com/Beijing-LA.htm.

League of the Month:
Milpitas Sports Center
By Bruce Liu

We’ve come a long way, baby! When we first started the League, we practically had to beg people to sign up. Now a reservation is required in advance — and at times we even have to turn people away. Our league is so popular that it has become one of the biggest — if not the biggest — in the United States, with over 270 participants playing nearly 5500 matches since its inception in 2003! In addition, we entered six teams in the USATT Team League, which commenced in January, 2007.

So the quantity is there but how about the quality? Three players rated over 2400 stand out: Sara Fu (2463), Zheng Jiaqi (2426) and James Guo (2447), all 19 years old. Sara and Zheng placed first and second, respectively, in Women’s Singles at the NATT 2006 Stiga NA Tour Finals. They are currently the #6 and #7 ranked women in the U.S. James is not too shabby either. He defeated former India national team member Chetan Baboor at the 2006 U.S. Open Teams Championships in Reno. Another player that plays regularly in our league is Ariel Hsing — the #1 USA Girls’ Cadet Team member (just 11 years old!).

We league players do very well in USATT sanctioned competitions — probably due mostly to the competition they experience regularly in our league matches. At the 2006 Stiga NA Tour Finals, our players won all the rating events from Under 1400 through Under 2250 (and finished second in Under 1250)! In fact, there were a few all-Milpitas finals. Twelve of our league players gained at least 100 rating points at the tournament.

Besides the high level of play, what makes the league in Milpitas Sports Center so popular?
• Great playing conditions: all courts are individually carpeted, lots of space, tournament grade tables, high ceiling, wood floor, scorekeeping…
• Team bonding: people hang out after the league. Many restaurants have benefited from our business.
• Incentives: a box of 3-star Nittaku premium balls for all winners. Table winners are promoted to the next league! Another player that plays in Reno. Another player that plays regularly in our league is Ariel Hsing — the #1 USA Girls’ Cadet Team member (just 11 years old!).

Our league players do very well in USATT sanctioned tournaments — probably due mostly to the competition they experience regularly in our league matches. At the 2006 Stiga NA Tour Finals, our players won all the rating events from Under 1400 through Under 2250 (and finished second in Under 1250)! In fact, there were a few all-Milpitas finals. Twelve of our league players gained at least 100 rating points at the tournament.

Besides the high level of play, what makes the league in Milpitas Sports Center so popular?

• Great playing conditions: all courts are individually carpeted, lots of space, tournament grade tables, high ceiling, wood floor, scorekeeping...
• Team bonding: people hang out after the league. Many restaurants have benefited from our business.
• Incentives: a box of 3-star Nittaku premium balls for all winners. Table winners are promoted to the next higher league the following week. Achieve a rating of 2100 and we waive the entry fee. All results are documented on our webpage with winner’s photos. (www.milpitastabletennis.com)

Last but not least, people have fun at the Milpitas Sports Center. People fight hard on the court and get along off the court. It is not just a table tennis club any more. When you come to the club, it is like you come to a place where everybody knows your name.
## 43rd ROBO-PONG ST. JOSEPH VALLEY OPEN

**MARCH 17th & 18th, 2007 · INDIANA UNIVERSITY at SOUTH BEND · SOUTH BEND, IN**

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## Tournament Information

**PLAYING SITE:**
Indiana University at South Bend
1730 Mishawaka Avenue
South Bend, IN 46634

Maps and directions can be found at [www.iusb.edu](http://www.iusb.edu) or [mapquest.com](http://mapquest.com)

**TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR**
Phil Schmucker

**TOURNAMENT REFEREE**
Karin Lee

**TOURNAMENT COMMITTEE**
Brad Balmer, Jerry Goeller, Kara Schmucker, Dan Seemiller

**ELIGIBILITY**
St. Joe Valley is open to USATT members or those who join. All age event cutoffs will be 3/17/07.

**NOTES:**
1) Tournament management may modify, combine, or cancel events, limit total entrants or total entries by event.
2) All USATT rules will be enforced.
3) Open Singles (event #01) and any event starting after 4 PM on Saturday may carry over final rounds to Sunday.
4) Entry Limitations - PLEASE DO NOT enter 2 rated events with same starting time OR more than 6 total events.
5) Unrated players may enter any event, HOWEVER they will not advance from their Round Robin.
6) All events will be 3 out of 5 games except Open Singles and Open Doubles which will be 4 out of 7.
7) Ratings as of the week of 2/15/07 will be used.
8) Any questions regarding the tournament, eligibility, or entry should be directed to Dan Seemiller at (574) 261-4545 between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM Eastern Time.
9) Withdrawals up through 3/10/07 will be eligible for full refunds.
10) Any image, photographic or otherwise, taken of tournament play or within the official venue is essentially the property of SBTTC. Entrants agree to allow their voice and likeness in such images to be reproduced in connection with SBTTC by way of any medium.

## Tournament Registration Form

**$10,000 IN PRIZE MONEY**

Days Inn has agreed to set aside rooms until 3/1/07 for South Bend Table Tennis. The rooms will be released after that date, so please take advantage of their support and reserve your room as soon as possible!

### DAYS INN

5275 S.R. 933 / Business 31
South Bend, IN 46637

- 574-277-0510
- $49.95 + Tax for Single or Double

Tell DAYS INN these rooms are for Saint Joe Valley Open Table Tennis - Dan Seemiller!!

### MAIL ENTRY FORM

Mail entry to:
Dan Seemiller
P.O. Box 608
New Carlisle, IN 46552

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**Please note - All times are on Eastern Time (ET).**

**ENTER EARLY** enter early ENTER EARLY enter early ENTER EARLY enter early ENTER EARLY enter early

**LIMITATIONS WILL BE PLACED BY EVENT & IN TOTAL PARTICIPANTS**

**DEADLINE** for **ENTRY** is Thursday, March 8, 2007 (but don't wait until the last minute!)

Please enter me in the circled events. I agree to comply with all USATT regulations. I accept full responsibility for my participation and release the SBTTC, IUSB, sponsors, and the USATT of any liability resulting from injury to myself or damage to my property.

**DEADLINE:**
Thursday, March 8, 2007

**Tournament Sponsorship:**
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**ENTRY BLANK**

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**Registration Fee:** $2.00

**Rating Fee:** $5.00

**USATT membership fee:**

- $40 for Adult - $20 for Junior
- $40 for Adult - $20 for Junior
- $40 for Adult - $20 for Junior
- $40 for Adult - $20 for Junior

**T-Shirt Donation:**

- S  | M  | L  | XL  |

- $14.00 (circle size)

**Juniors Team Donation**

**TOTAL ENCLOSED**

**Checks payable to:**

- South Bend TTC

**USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • March/April 2007**
Fall Regional Collegiate Tournaments
By Liang Liu, NCTTA Public Relations Director

The end of the year marks one of the busiest times in the NCTTA league as sixteen divisions carry out their divisional tournaments. Due to space limitations, only three divisions are summarized below: the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, and Southern California fall regional tournaments. Special thanks to all the division directors who provided great details of the tournaments!

Southern California Division
Date: November 4, 2006
Host: University of Southern California

Six schools, including University of Southern California, University of California, Los Angeles, University of California Irvine, University of California San Diego, Cal Tech and Occidental, along with about 50 competitors competed in this regional tournament. Three women's teams were present, USC, UCSD and Caltech. USC's women's team came out on top with a tight victory over UC San Diego. Caltech's three player team took UCSD's top woman player out of the tie and the Caltech team beat UCSD 3-2 by winning all three singles matches.

On the men's side, Occidental, Caltech and Irvine were pretty evenly matched but Irvine proved to have the deepest line-up. It was a good match between Occidental and Caltech, but newcomer Occidental won by one match. UCLA, USC and UCSD were in a class of their own, beating all other teams 5-0. USC and UCSD again proved to be the heavy hitters of the SoCal division both beating UCLA 5-0. In the final, USC, with their strongest team ever, was pitted against UCSD, who had a consistent, deep team. USC won the doubles but lost the tie 2-3 to UCSD, making UCSD the regional winner.

Midwest Division
Date: November 11, 2006
Host: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The level of competition was very high in the first five rounds. The biggest upset of the tournament was in the first round, with Purdue beating UW-Madison 3-2. Purdue later lost to the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign 5-0. In doubles, the two teams battled five long games. In the sixth round, University of Illinois and UW-Madison played against each other. When the singles were tied 2-2, the team match came down to doubles, with the UW-Madison ultimately winning in five games. At this point, University of Illinois led UW-Madison by five games. Illinois had a bye in the seventh and final round, and UW-Madison played UW-Milwaukee. The A seeds for both teams had been undefeated the entire tournament. Madison won all four singles, with a huge come-from-behind win in the D singles spot. In the end, Madison defeated the host school 5-0, tying University of Illinois for first place.

Mid-Atlantic Division
Date: November 18, 2006
Host: Johns Hopkins University

The regional tournament featured seven schools, four returning (The University of Maryland at College Park, The University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Johns Hopkins University) and three new (Gwynedd-Mercy College, Ursinus College, and The University of Maryland at Baltimore County). Two Women's teams each from College Park and JHU competed as well. UMD College Park's Women team came out victorious in 3 straight sets. On the other side, the decisive match ended up with Princeton and Maryland, who split their four matches 2-2; this gave way for a decisive doubles match. The teams split the first two games, and Princeton took the third. Maryland mounted an admirable comeback in the fourth game, but ultimately Princeton won out and defeated Maryland in four sets, 3-1.

Meetings at the USA Nationals
By Larry Hodges

There were meetings throughout the USA Nationals, most of them open to anyone. Some of the meetings included:

- U.S. Table Tennis Hall of Fame Banquet
- Certified Referee Clinic and Umpire/Referee Seminar
- Paralympic Classification Clinic
- Wheelchair Umpire Clinic
- U.S. Table Tennis Hall of Fame Board Meeting
- Regional Tournament Coordinators Meeting
- USATT Coaching Seminar
- USATT Board of Directors Meeting

I attended the Hall of Fame Banquet, where Khoa Nguyen, Kasia Dawidowicz, Danny Pecora and Si Wasserman were inducted to the U.S. Table Tennis Hall of Fame, with Tim Boggan and Hall of Fame President Steve Isaason giving presentations (with slideshow) of each of the nominees illustrious careers. It was a great evening, attended by many of the greats of past and present U.S. Table Tennis. (There will be profiles of the inductees in upcoming issues, starring with Khoa in this issue.)

I also attended the USATT Coaching Seminar. It was run by USA Men's Coach Dan Seimiller, with help from USATT Coaching Chair John Allen, who helped set it up along with USATT Executive Director and USA Women's Coach Doru Gheorghe. Twenty-two coaches attended.

Dan took us through tapes from the 2006 Worlds in Bremen, and talked about the major new techniques used there, including the forearm hold serve, backhand loops over the table (especially against serves), aggressive flips off short serves, and inside-out forehand loops from the middle of the table. Matches watched and analyzed included Ching Li vs. Werner Schlager, Peter Korbel vs. Joo Se Hyuk, Wang Lijin vs. Timo Boll, Wang Hao vs. Oh Sang Eun, and Ryu Seung Min vs. Wang Lijin.

Officials Seminar at the USA Nationals
By Michael Wetzel (NU/CR)

Officials – referees and umpires – did more than call what they saw at the USA Nationals and U.S. Open Paralympics in Dec. 12-17 in Las Vegas. Among the 10 table tennis meetings at the Stratosphere’s Sierra Room on the 24th floor, two education programs and an umpire/referee open forum targeted tournament officials.

At 1 p.m. on Dec. 12, international referee and international umpire Wendell Dillon of Atlanta, Ga., conducted a four-hour certified referee seminar for umpires preparing to take the CR exam. Thirteen umpires in attendance heard Dillon discuss proper draw procedures and specific duties of tournament referees. Dillon used a slide presentation to help illustrate geographic separation when doing draws.

Dillon warned the group to study before taking the CR exam. He said failure rate is more than 30 percent, with only three perfect scores recorded to date.

Attending the CR seminar were Steve Banko, Jerry Button, William W. Chern, Valeriy Elizanov, Yuriy Elizanov, Dick Evans, Philip Hawk, Fred E. Kistler, Lai Chi Kong (CAN), Arthur Paolini Jr., Boris Rozin, Daniel Rutenberg and Robert R. Salmon.

At 8 p.m. on Dec. 12, paralympic referee Karol Zidulak of Canada drew 34 umpires to his IPTTC officials certification seminar on officiating wheelchair matches. Zidulak, who served as the U.S. Open Paralympic referee, covered legal services and movement in wheelchair doubles. He fielded questions during the lively two-hour seminar.

Afterwards, he administered the wheelchair qualification exam to the international umpires in attendance. Many of the U's are taking the test to prepare for the Para-Pan-Am Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in mid-August 2007.

At 9 p.m. on Dec. 13, the officials returned to the Sierra Room for an hour-long open forum, led by Dillon, who served as deputy referee at the Nationals. Marilyn Sommer Feinstein of Denver, Co., gave a presentation on using a new doubles service sequence to “add excitement to doubles.” (See article this issue.)
### Tournament Information

- **Tournament Director**: Greg Thompson, gtnotes@hotmail.com or 859-781-0050
- **Tournament Referee**: Alan Grambo
- **Tournament Director** may modify combine, or cancel events, limit entries & assign temporary rating for unrated players.
- **Limitations** will be placed by event and in total entries, so enter early to guarantee your events.
- Unrated players may enter any event (except rated doubles), but they will NOT advance from their Round Robin.
- For all events, except the Open and Doubles: Round Robin Groups of 4, best 3 of 5 games. Top Two advance to Single Elimination.
- The Open and Doubles: Single Elimination; Best 4 of 7 games for all Rounds.
- Ratings from April 2007 will be used.
- Withdrawals after May 1, 2007 will not be refunded.
- White Nittaku Three Star Premium Balls will be used.
- Clothing must not be white or light grey.
- Rackets must have USATT approved rubber. Only USATT approved equipment may be used.
- All USATT rules will be enforced.

### Tournament Entry Form

**Visit [http://nkytt.org/open](http://nkytt.org/open) for complete tournament information.**

**Primary Hotel & Airport Information** (other hotels and airports listed online):
- Hotel: Country Inn & Suites (5 minutes from the Tournament) 800-456-4000 refer to the Northern Kentucky Table Tennis rate or visit [http://www.countryinnss.com](http://www.countryinnss.com) - Online registration code: Tennis
- $85 for 2 Queen beds or $105 for a Suite with 2 Queen beds and additional fold-out bed
- Airport: Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport (airport code CVG)

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### Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati 2007 Open - Entry Deadline is April 27, 2007 - Circle Events You are Entering:

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Top TWO Advance to Single Elimination from ALL Round Robin Groups!
Dear Reader,

I had a great time at the Nationals in Las Vegas. I won three medals, silver in Under 1500 Hardbat, silver in Under 1600, and bronze in over 40 Under 1600.

I had never played hardbat before in any tournament and I only practiced a few times prior to the Nationals. My USATT rating for the Nationals was 1415. My age was 43. Well, I was shocked that I made it all the way to the final in the Under 1500 event. I lost 2-0 to a superior player, but enjoyed myself immensely. I wasn’t sure how I would be received by the hardbat community since I was new and a sponge player to boot. After about five minutes practicing with one of the guys, my worries subsided. There is a whole different world of fun and excitement and friendly people that us sponge players are missing out on. They welcomed me with open arms. They showed me how to hit properly; my forehand really stunk! They told me great stories, and they played with enthusiasm and great attitudes. No anger problems here! I had the time of my life and made a lot of new friends.

Ivan, Jonathan, Robert, Tim and Tim, Gerald, HerreIman, Dana, Scott, Harriett (what a sweet lady!), Al, and the rest of the players under 1700 here. They welcomed me with open arms. They realized I wasn’t always tossing the ball high enough. No one had complained about my serves ever in any tournament, so I was caught off guard when the international referee faulted me without warning. Had a lot of you players made that same final, you would also have been faulted.

As players we get used to our routines and other local club players and we don’t really think about technically correct serves, but we should. If you are faulted at a National Final you will lose your concentration, because your routine will be broken. So practice getting your serves right, even in practice matches, so you can concentrate on your opponent and not the referee. I believe the referee was correct in faulting me and I will make the necessary adjustments.

Kudos to Doro Gheorghe for adding the U-2700 doubles event at my request. He agreed with me that lower-rated players needed a doubles event too. I think it was a success. Thanks to all the USATT people for putting on a great tournament. Also, big thanks to Bruce Bayley, Christopher Portillo, Larry Scott, Judy Bayley, Mary Vincent, Gissella Haw, Sean Layton, Anna Kim. All these individuals watched my matches as I made my run to the medals. Anna gave me kisses between games, now that’s sideline support!

Thank you,

Dave Edwards, Beaverton, Oregon

Japan’s Koji Matsushita has a playful moment at the SPINvitational (p.88).
North American Table Tennis would like to thank Table Tennis Pioneers and STIGA for their support over the past 7 years for the North American Teams and the North American Tour. North American Table Tennis announces that JOOLA is now the official sponsor for the North American Teams and the North American Tour. Because of the change of sponsor, NATT is selling its entire inventory of STIGA Expert Tables and Barriers. Please call us for Special Pricing for these tables as we switch over to JOOLA.

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- CONVENIENT TO MOVE AND STORE
- DURABLE TABLE SETS UP QUICKLY
- GREAT FOR HOME AND CLUB USE
- TAKES UP LITTLE SPACE
- EASY TO ASSEMBLE
- CALL FOR CLUB PRICES OR FOR DEALS ON "MORE EXPERIENCED" TABLES

FOR ONLINE ORDERS AND TABLE SPECS, VISIT: http://www.natabletennis.com
Serving Up a Rule Change for Doubles
By Marilyn Sommer Feinstein, USPTA, and daughter of Thelma Thall Sommer and niece of Leah Thall Neuberger, the 2005 winners of the Mark Matthews Lifetime Achievement Award

- What if there were a way to level the playing field when lefties and righties play each other in doubles?
- What if your doubles team had more tactics in your arsenal?
- What if there were an easier way to stay on track and not get mixed up with the score in doubles?

In singles, you, the player, are not relegated to having to serve only from the right side. There is a greater array of angles you may use by having both diagonals from which to choose (as well as the option of serving from the middle). Why shouldn’t servers in doubles be given a greater array of angles (that they would automatically have by serving one serve from the right and the second serve from the left side)?

Over the years, the idea of serving from alternate sides in doubles has been discussed, but was not conducive with the former scoring rules of five serves at a time. With the established rule change of alternating with two serves per set of serves, the idea of alternating diagonals when serving (from the right and left sides) now makes sense.

The USATT wishes to BETA TEST this rule change. We are inviting you to try out the following serving format for doubles at your respective clubs and provide us with written feedback with the survey at the end of article:

- The server shall serve the first serve from the right side of the table and the second serve from the left side.
- As the receiver follows the same person throughout the particular game of the match, the server shall serve the first serve from the right side of the table, and the second serve to the same receiver from the left side.
- Should the game go to deuce, each server would continue to serve from the right side of the table. (Or should the serve change?)

As shown in the following diagram, Player X of the XY team serves his or her first serve to Player A of the AB team and the four players play out the point; Player X then serves his or her second serve again to Player A (as in current doubles rules, Player A always follows Player X in the current game), but from the left side of the table. Play continues with each server serving their first of two serves from their right side of the table; and their second of two serves from their left side of the table to the same receiver each time.

This modification of serving in doubles would not only level the playing field for lefties and righties, but could actually build more creativity into the playing dynamics of the match. The larger array of angles built into serving from the left side of the table as well as from the right side could add another dimension to the game. Who knows, maybe this added dimension could help make doubles more fun to play and more interesting for others to watch.

We are interested in having you play some matches with the proposed rule change. Below you’ll find a survey to fill out and return after playing with the new format.

---

After having played a number of 3 out of 5 game doubles matches with the proposed serving rule change, please fill out the following survey to: Wendell Dillon, Chair of USATT Rules Committee, 662 Dorsey Circle, Lilburn, GA 30047

I liked playing doubles using the above serving rule: _ Very Much _ Somewhat _ Not At All

If you liked playing with the above serving rule, please check all that apply:

- having additional angles serving on the left side allowed my partner and I to do more things with our serves toward our opponents
- I felt that lefties and righties had the same level playing field
- It was easier to keep track of the score
- Serving from both sides of the table made the game more interesting
- other

If you didn’t like playing with the above serving rule, please explain why:

Name:  
Membership #:  
Rating:
T = Trophy, RR = Round Robin Format, SE= Single elimination.

All matches are 3 out of 5 games except for events 1 & 2 which are 4 out of 7 games. Tournament committee reserves the right to modify prize money and/or cancel any event if there are insufficient entries. No prize money shall be awarded for splits and/or unfinished matches. NO EXCEPTIONS PLEASE!!

ENTRY DEADLINE: Entries must be postmarked by May 18th, 2007. Late entries will be accepted with a $10.00 late fee subject to space availability.

ELIGIBILITY: All players must be USATT members. Please bring your USATT membership card or receipt. Non-members must join USATT at the tournament. Junior players must be under 17, 15 and 12 respectively, as of the tournament date. Senior players must be 40 by Dec 31st, 2007. Unrated players may play in any singles event but unrated RR group will not be allowed to participate in two events that start at the same time.

DEFAULT POLICY: All ITTF-USATT regulations apply. Must abide by all USATT rules. Players not registered within 10 minutes after starting time of the event may be defaulted.

REFUND POLICY: Players will be refunded for entry fees at least one week prior to tournament dates selected. Refunds will not be given for any withdrawals after that date except when the player's rating is too high for a desired event and he or she chooses not to be promoted to the next highest event. Phone/Email entries are responsible for full entry fees if not withdrawn at least one week prior to start of tournament date selected. No refund for no-show participants!

USATT AFFILIATED SPONSORING CLUB: Lower Naugatuck Valley TTC

ATTENTION: Please CIRCLE event(s) entered

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USA Table Tennis: ATHLETE SELECTION PROCEDURES, 2008 Olympic Games

I. SELECTION SYSTEM

A. Provide the minimum eligibility requirements for an athlete to be considered for nomination to the Team:
   1. Citizenship: Athletes must be citizens of the United States and eligible under the international rules of the IOC at the commencement of the Official Draw of the U.S. Trials (Section I.D.). Athletes must have a current, valid US passport at the time of nomination.
   2. Minimum IF standards for participation (if any): N/A
   3. Other requirements (if any):
      - Athletes must be members of USA Table Tennis (USATT).

B. Provide a brief summary outlining how an athlete is selected as a Nominee to the Team (include maximum team size).

   I) Men’s and Women’s singles- Maximum 3 athletes/gender/NOC

   An athlete may qualify as a member of the 2008 Olympic team through the following criteria/events listed in priority order, until the U.S. fills all eligible slots, up to 3 athletes per gender:

   2. Automatic qualification for the top 20 players in the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Ranking published January 1, 2008 (which includes results from all qualified tournaments from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007) with a maximum of 2 players/gender/NOC per ITTF Qualification criteria. (see Attachment B). If there are more than two USATT top 20 ranked athletes, the two eligible, highest ranked per gender will earn the automatic qualification.
   3. Qualification through the 2008 North American Trials (“NA Trials”), (the date and location will be listed on the USATT website, www.usatt.org, no later than 30 days prior to the commencement of the NA Trials) via qualification at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials (“U.S. Trials”), (the date and location will be listed on the USATT website, www.usatt.org, no later than 30 days prior to the commencement of the U.S. Trials.) Per the ITTF Selection Quotas, one NA Trials event will be held for Men’s and Women’s Singles for athletes from Bermuda, Canada and the USA. The ITTF has allocated 3 slots/gender for North America. If one of the Gold Medalists from the Pan Am Games is from North America, then the North American quota will be reduced by one slot of the respective gender.

   USATT will hold one U.S. Trials event for Men’s and Women’s Singles in order to select the singles athletes that will represent the U.S. at the NA Trials. The final number of athletes that will be selected to compete will be based on North American Table Tennis Union (NATTU) criteria which is TBD and will be posted on the USATT Website, www.usatt.org, no more than five days after the criteria has been established.

   4. Qualification through the ITTF World Qualification Tournament- 1-18 May 2008, location TBD and will be posted on the USATT website, www.usatt.org, at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the World Qualification Tournament. Per ITTF Qualification Criteria (see Attachment B) the USA may be entitled to enter athletes in singles events to compete at the World Qualification Tournament. If USATT has remaining slots available, they will select the number of athletes allowed to participate in the World Qualification Tournament in rank order from the NA Trials (first priority) then proceeding to selection from the U.S Trials in rank order (second priority.) Athletes will be required to pay all expenses associated with attending the World Qualification Tournament.

   If the USA fills its maximum number of entries through qualifying as the Gold Medalist at the 2007 Pan Am Games, and the ITTF World Ranking and/or through the NA Trials, the USA will not be eligible to nominate athletes to participate at the ITTF World Qualification Tournament.

   II) Men’s and Women’s Team- Maximum one team/gender/NOC

   Athletes qualified in singles will form the US Team according to ITTF Qualification Criteria (see Attachment B). If the USA qualifies less then 3 athletes/gender per gender in Singles events, and if the U.S. qualifies for the Team event, the team may be formed with athletes who are already qualified in Singles plus the next athlete(s) per gender, according to the finishing order at the NA Trials. (See ITTF Qualification Criteria, Attachment B.)

C. Tryout Events:

   1. Provide the event names, dates and location of all trials, events and/or camps to be used as part of the selection process.
      - 2008 U.S. Trials- Men’s and Women’s Singles
         o The site for the Trials-TBD (The date and location will be posted on the USATT website, www.usatt.org at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the 2008 U.S. Trials)
         o Tentative schedule is February-March, 2008.
      - 2008 North American Trials
         o The site for the NA Trials-TBD (The date and location will be posted on the USATT website, www.usatt.org at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the N A Trials)
         o Tentative schedule- March - April 2008
      - World Qualification Tournament
         o The site for the World Qualification Tournament – TBD (the location will be posted on the USATT website, www.usatt.org at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the World Qualification Tournament.)
         o May 1-18, 2008

   2. Provide event names, dates, locations and description of how athletes qualify for any “preliminary or qualifying” events or procedures that are prerequisites to attend any of the events listed above in C. 1 (if any).
      - 2008 U.S Trials Qualifying Tournament – Men’s and Women’s Singles
         o The site for the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament – TBD (The date and location will be posted on the USATT website, www.usatt.org at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament.) This event will be held one day prior to the 2008 US Trials
         o Date- February- March, 2008

   3. Provide the event name, dates and locations of additional trials that will be used to determine “start positions” (if any). NA

D. Provide a comprehensive, step-by-step description of the method that explains how athletes will go through the selection process to become team nominees.

   There is a maximum of three athletes/gender that the USA can qualify for the 2008 Olympic Games through the following selection process:

   1. If a U.S. Team member is the Gold Medalist in the Men’s or Women’s singles competition at the 2007 Pan Am Games he/she will automatically qualify for the 2008 Olympic Games. See Pan Am Games Technical Manual (Attachment A).
   2. U.S. athletes in the top 20 of the ITTF World Ranking as of January 1, 2008 (which includes results from all qualified tournaments from January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007) automatically qualify for 2008 Olympic Games with a maximum of 2 players/gender/NOC. The ITTF Ranking is based on results from ITTF official competitions.
   3. If there are remaining slot(s) for the U.S. not filled by the top 2 U.S. athletes per gender ranked in the top 20 of the ITTF ranking or the winner of the Pan Am Games, the slot(s) will be filled by the top finishers, per gender, in rank order from the 2008 NA Trials per ITTF Qualification Criteria (Attachment B).

USA Table Tennis MAGAZINE – March/April 2007
Qualifying to the 2008 Olympic Games

1. North American Trials

If there are remaining slots after athletes are nominated to the Olympic Team through #1 and #2 above, athletes who competed in the U.S. Trials will be selected in rank order to compete in the NA Trials.

A list ranking the Olympic Games eligible athletes will be created based upon the results of the matches played in the 2008 NA Trials and the remaining slots will be filled in order by athletes who competed at the NA Trials, per gender, per ITTF Qualification Criteria (Attachment B), and then they will be nominated to the USOC for the 2008 Olympic Games.

2. World Qualifying Tournament

If the USA does not qualify 3 athletes/gender through #1, #2, or #3 above, the USA may be entitled to enter athletes equal to the remaining spots, (3 minus the number of athletes qualified) to the World Qualifying Tournament. USATT, if qualified, will select the number of athletes allowed to participate in the World Qualification Tournament in rank order, from the NA Trials (first priority) then proceeding to selection from the U.S. Trials in rank order (second priority) if slots still remain. Athletes will be required to pay all expenses associated with attending the World Qualification Tournament.

Qualifying to the North American Trials

2008 U.S. Trials

This tournament will be used to select athletes to compete in the North American Trials. The final number of athletes who will be selected to compete will be based on NATTU criteria which is TBD and will be posted on the USATT Website, www.usatt.org, no more than five days after the criteria has been established.

A. Provide rationale for utilizing discretionary selection (if any): N/A

B. List the discretionary criteria and explain how it will be used: N/A

C. Discretionary Selection Committee

A. Prior to acceptance of nomination by the USOC, USATT has jurisdiction over potential nominees.

REMOVAL OF ATHLETES

Reasons. as determined by USATT.

Qualifying to the 2008 U.S. Trials

2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament

Four spots at the U.S. Trials will be reserved for the two male and the two female athletes who place first and second at a separate qualifying tournament (the “2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament.”) The date and location will be posted at www.usatt.org at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament. These two athletes per gender will be seeded 1st and 2nd at the 2008 U.S. Trials. Players will compete in round robin or knockout elimination competitions depending on the final number of entries, to determine the top two athletes from this field. Each match in the 2008 U.S. Qualifying Tournament will be the best of seven games.

Proof of Citizenship

If any of the athletes, male or female, are not U.S. citizens as of January 1, 2008, they may petition USATT in writing by January 10, 2008, to be considered for participation in the 2008 U.S. Trials or the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament (notification must be received by USATT National Office by January 10, 2008). The notification must include copies of original documentation that demonstrates the petitioner’s initiation of the USA citizenship process as well as a timeline of the anticipated “swearing in” date. The athletes will be notified in writing by January 20, 2008, of their pre-approval for invitation to participate in the 2008 U.S. Trials or the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament and consideration for nomination to the 2008 Olympic Team, or their denial of such.

Final approval of an athlete's request to compete in the 2008 U.S. Trials or the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament will be contingent upon his/her proof of U.S. citizenship by the date of the Official Draw, which will occur three weeks prior to the commencement of the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament. If the pre-approved athlete is unable to provide proof of U.S. citizenship by the Official Draw date, he/she will not be allowed to compete in the 2008 U.S. Trials or the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament and the next ranked athlete who is eligible to compete in the 2008 U.S. Trials or the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament (detailed above), not already qualified for the 2008 U.S. Trials or the 2008 U.S. Trials Qualifying Tournament, will be invited.

Team

Up to 3 athletes per gender, who qualify in Singles for nomination to the 2008 Olympic Team via the criteria above, will form the U.S. Team to compete at the 2008 Olympic Games if the U.S. qualifies in the Team event per ITTF Qualification Criteria (Attachment B). If the U.S. qualifies less than 3 athletes per gender in Singles events, and if the U.S. qualifies for the Team event, the team may be formed with athletes who are already qualified in Singles plus the next athlete(s) per gender, according to the finishing order at the NA Trials for Men’s and Women’s Singles. (See ITTF Qualification Criteria, Attachment B.)

Only the athletes who originally qualified in Singles will be eligible to compete in the Singles events.

E. Provide the names of all committees/groups who oversee the selection process, including the name(s) and role(s) of their members.

Elite Athlete Committee:
Bob Fox and Todd Sweeris- co-chairs
Ashu hai- Olympic Athlete Rep.
Whitney Ping- female athlete Rep.
Khoa Nguyen- male athlete Rep.
Emilia Gheorge- member- USA National Cadet Girl’s Team coach
David Zhang- member- player- Olympian
Sheri Pittman- ex-officio member-USATT President
Dan Seemiller-ex-officio member- National Men’s team coach
Teodor Gheorge-ex-officio member- USATT Executive Director

II. DISCRETIONARY SELECTION (if applicable)

A. Provide rationale for utilizing discretionary selection (if any): N/A

B. List the discretionary criteria and explain how it will be used: N/A

C. Discretionary Selection Committee

1. Provide the name of the committee(s) that will be responsible for discretionary selection. N/A

2. Provide a complete List of the members of the committee(s), their titles and their NGB role that qualifies them to serve in this capacity. N/A

III. REMOVAL OF ATHLETES

A. Prior to acceptance of nomination by the USOC, USATT has jurisdiction over potential nominees.

An athlete who is to be nominated to the Team by USATT may be removed from the Nominations for any of the following reasons, as determined by USATT.
V. NGB SIGNATURES

XIV. ATHLETE OMBUDSMAN

The USATT Bylaws and Grievance Procedures can be found at:

XII.

XI.

X. ANTI-DOPING REQUIREMENTS

VIII. DATE OF NOMINATION

I. V.

V. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

USATT will retain all supporting documents, including scouting or evaluation forms, etc., and data from the selection process for six months past the date of the Closing Ceremonies of the Games.

VI. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The following documents are required to be signed by an athlete as a condition of participation in the Olympic Games, and are included as attachments:

- Code of Conduct- Attachment C
- National Team Agreement- Attachment D

VII. PUBLICITY/DISTRIBUTION OF PROCEDURES

The USOC approved Selection Procedures (complete and unaltered) will be posted/published by the USATT in the following locations and will include the USOC approval date:

A. NGB website: www.usatt.org
- The selection procedures will be posted as soon as possible, but not more than 5 business days following notice of approval by the USOC.

B. NGB Official Publication (if any): USATT Magazine

C. Other: N/A

VIII. DATE OF NOMINATION

Nomination of Athletes form, including replacements, will be submitted to the USOC on: June 1, 2008

IX. MANDATORY TRAINING AND/OR COMPETITION

Specify the location, schedule and duration of mandatory training and/or competition:

- At this time it is anticipated that there will be a mandatory Olympic Games Preparation Camp held in the United States or overseas. Final mandatory training activities will be announced and posted on www.usatt.org when determined and no later than 30 days prior to the mandatory training.

X. ANTI-DOPING REQUIREMENTS

Athletes must adhere to all IOC, WADA, ITTF, USADA and USOC anti-doping protocols, policies and procedures. This includes participation in out of competition testing as required by the IOC, WADA, ITTF, USADA and USOC Anti-Doping Agency.

XI. DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTION PROCEDURES

The following committee/group (include names and titles) was responsible for creating these Selection Procedures:

- Elite Athlete Committee
  - Bob Fox- co-chair
  - Todd Sweeris- co-chair
  - Ashu Jain- Olympic athlete rep.
  - Whitney Ping- female athlete rep.
  - Khoa Nguyen- male athlete rep.
  - Emilia Gheorghe- member - USA National Cadet Girl's Team Coach
  - David Zhuang- member - player- Olympian
  - Sheri Pittman- ex-officio member-USATT President
  - Dan Seemiller-ex-officio member- National Men's team coach
  - Teodor Gheorghe - USATT Executive Director

XII. NGB BYLAWS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The USATT Bylaws and Grievance Procedures can be found at:

http://www.usatt.org/organization/bylaws/index.shtml

XIII. INTERNATIONAL DISCLAIMER

These procedures are based on IOC, and/or ITTF rules and regulations as presently known and understood. Any change in the selection procedures caused by a change in IOC and/or ITTF rules and regulations will be distributed to the affected athletes immediately. The selection criteria are based on the latest information available to USATT. However, the selections are always subject to unforeseen, intervening circumstances, and realistically may not have accounted for every possible contingency.

XIV. ATHLETE OMBUDSMAN

Athletes who have questions regarding their opportunity to compete that are not answered by USATT may contact the USOC Athlete Ombudsman: John W. Ruger by:

- Toll free telephone at (888) ATHLETE
- E-mail at john.ruger@usoc.org
- www.888athlete.org

XV. NGB SIGNATURES

I certify that I have read, understand and incorporated our IF standards/criteria into our Selection Procedures and that the information provided herein regarding Athlete Selection Procedures represents the method approved by USATT.
The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) will apply to the athlete individually. The table tennis competitions during the XV Pan American Games Rio 2007 will be a Qualifying Competition for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

32.4 Qualification System Approval

The qualification system was revised and approved by ITTF on August 17, 2006 but ITTF changed the date of the Latin America Qualification Event and of the Special Qualification Tournament on September 4, 2006.

32.5 Olympic Qualification

The table tennis tournaments during the XV Pan American Games Rio 2007 will be a Qualifying Competition for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

During this competition, the qualification system will be as follow:

- The gold medalists, men’s and women’s, in the individual events, will directly qualify for the table tennis competition in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The qualification will apply to the athlete individually.

Attachment B

GAMES OF THE XXIX OLYMPIAD, BEIJING 2008 TABLE TENNIS

The International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) events:

- Men’s Singles and Teams, Women’s Singles and Teams

ATHLETE / NOC QUOTA

Athlete quota: 86 men, 86 women, Total of 172 athletes

Maximum per NOC: The maximum number of athletes per NOC shall be (three) 3 men and (three) 3 women.

QUALIFICATION SYSTEM: SINGLES

64 Total - with a maximum of three (3) players from the same NOC

Players will be qualified through continental qualification events, held between August 2007 and 15 April 2008, according to the following distribution:

20 ITTF World Ranking, with a maximum of two (2) players per NOC

40 Continental qualification system

1 Tripartite Commission Invitation place

1 Host nation direct entry

2 Final World Qualification Event

64 Total - with a maximum of three (3) players from the same NOC

Preliminary rounds, in addition to the main draw of 64, may be necessary in Singles events to accommodate the total number of qualified athletes if the Final World Qualification Tournament qualifies more than two (2) players because the Team Quota (22 places) is not fully utilised.

1. ITTF World Ranking Qualification

The top twenty (20) players on the first ITTF World Ranking published following the 2007 ITTF Protour Finals to be held in December 2007 (January 2008 World Ranking), will be qualified, with a maximum of two (2) players per NOC.

2. Continental Qualification

Players will be qualified through continental qualification events, held between August 2007 and 15 April 2008, according to the following distribution:

6 Africa, 11 Asia, 11 Europe, 6 Latin America, 3 North America, 3 Oceania; 40 Total

Each Continental Federation is responsible for holding its own qualification events but they must provide the ITTF with the planning of the qualification events (dates, places and number of players to qualify in each tournament) before 31 December 2006, as well as the names of the qualified players after each qualifying event according to the above quota and according to the established timelines.

3. Host nation

The host nation shall directly qualify one (1) place in each Singles event if not already qualified by Ranking or by Continental Qualification. If the host nation direct entry place is already filled through Ranking or by Continental Qualification, then one (1) additional place will be added to the Final World Qualification event.

4. Final World Qualification Tournament

The top two (2) players at the World Qualification Tournament will qualify for the Singles event. Entries to the World Qualification Tournament will be limited to players who have otherwise not qualified by the ITTF World Ranking or by continental qualification. NOCs may only enter the same number of athletes as qualification places remaining, within the maximum number of three (3) per NOC. The number of qualification places for the Singles events from this competition may be increased if the continental qualification allocation of 40 players is not reached, if the host nation direct entry place is not used and/or if the Team Quota (22 places) is not fully utilised.

5. Tripartite Commission (IOC-ANOC-ITTF) Invitation places

One place in men’s singles and one place in women’s singles shall be used by the IOC-ANOC-ITTF Tripartite Commission to allocate Invitation places, in accordance with the general process of the Tripartite Commission Invitations. Eligible NOCs must apply for these invitation places prior to the deadline of (date to be determined). The Tripartite Commission will, by (date to be determined), establish which invitation requests meet the identified general criteria of NOC delegation size and technical standard, and provisionally allocate places to one male and one female player. The final allocation of Invitation places will be done on (date to be determined). To be eligible to compete in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, the players filling invitation places must have played in a Continental Championship or a World event. Should these places not be allocated due to the technical level of the players, they will be added to the places allocated through the Final World Qualification Tournament.
GAMES OF THE XXIX OLYMPIAD, BEIJING 2008 TABLE TENNIS

Original version: English 23/ITTF/APRIL06/page 3-5

TEAM EVENTS – 16 Men's and 16 Women's Teams

Sixteen (16) Teams for each of the Men’s Team and Women’s Team events will qualify as follows:

1. Host nation direct entry
2. Continental quota
3. Remaining teams: 9 (10 if the host nation is qualified by continental quota)
4. Reallocation of unused quota positions

1. Continental quota

Six (6) teams: 1 for Africa, 1 for Asia, 1 for Europe, 1 for Latin America, 1 for North America, 1 for Oceania.

One (1) team from each continent (six (6) teams) will be selected as follows:

a) For each continent, the highest ranked team with three (3) players qualified for the singles events will form a team and will be designated the Continental Quota for that continent.
b) For continents where no NOC has three (3) players qualified in singles, the NOC with the highest ranked two (2) qualified players will be supplemented with a player from the Teams player quota (22) to form a Team of three (3) players.
c) For continents where no NOC has at least two (2) players qualified in singles, the NOC with the highest ranked qualified player will be supplemented with two (2) players from the Teams player quota (22) to form a Team of three (3) players.
d) The Continental Computer Team Ranking method will be used to determine the order of Ranking of the Teams, taking into consideration the NOCs concerned only and the qualified players from those NOCs.

2. Host nation direct entry: 1 Team

In each Team event, the host nation is guaranteed one (1) direct entry. If the host nation entry has not been selected as the continental quota, the necessary number of places from the Team events player quota will be allocated to complete the team if necessary.

3. Remaining teams: 9 (10 if the host nation is qualified by continental quota)

The remaining teams will qualify based on the following principles:

a) NOCs with three (3) players qualified for singles and NOCs with two (2) players qualified for singles will be part of the first selection. Those NOCs will be ranked according to the January 2008 Team ranking list.
b) If more than 9 (or 10) teams can be formed in this manner, then the top 9 (or 10) teams according to the ITTF's World Team ranking method will qualify. NOCs with two (2) qualified players in singles will be supplemented with one player from the Team player quota (22) to form Teams of three (3) players.
c) If less than 9 (or 10) teams can be formed in this manner, then NOCs with one (1) player qualified in singles will be supplemented with two (2) players from the Teams player quota (22) to form Teams of three (3) players, in order of ranking, until the quota of 9 (or 10) Teams is completed.

4. Reallocation of unused quota positions

The remaining teams will qualify based on the following principles:

a) NOCs with three (3) players qualified for singles and NOCs with two (2) players qualified for singles will be part of the first selection. Those NOCs will be ranked according to the January 2008 Team ranking list.
b) If more than 9 (or 10) teams can be formed in this manner, then the top 9 (or 10) teams according to the ITTF's World Team ranking method will qualify. NOCs with two (2) qualified players in singles will be supplemented with one player from the Team player quota (22) to form Teams of three (3) players.
c) If less than 9 (or 10) teams can be formed in this manner, then NOCs with one (1) player qualified in singles will be supplemented with two (2) players from the Teams player quota (22) to form Teams of three (3) players, in order of ranking, until the quota of 9 (or 10) Teams is completed.

QUALIFICATION TIMELINE

31 December 2006 Continental Federations will determine the Continental Qualification tournaments for Singles and advise all their National Associations of dates and location of their qualifying events and the system of qualification.

January 2007 ITTF will announce the Continental Qualification tournaments

1 Aug 07-15 Apr 08 Period for holding the singles continental qualification events TBC Deadline for the submission of requests for Tripartite Commission Invitation places by all NOCs.

January 2008 ITTF World Ranking list published following the 2007 Pre-tour Finals World qualifying first 20 players from this list. TBC The Tripartite Commission will decide the provisional allocation of the invitation places. TBC The Tripartite Commission will allocate the invitation places and confirm, in writing, to the NOCs concerned.

30 April 2008 Notification of qualified players by Continental Federations to the ITTF Headquarters

1 - 16 May 2008 Final World Qualification Tournament for teams.

30 May 2008 ITTF to confirm to NFs/NOCs the names of all qualified singles players, Teams and players only qualified for Teams events

15 June 2008 NOCs to confirm to ITTF the entry of participating players to the Games.

GAMES OF THE XXIX OLYMPIAD, BEIJING 2008 TABLE TENNIS

Original version: English 23/ITTF/APRIL06/page 4-5

DATES / PROCESS OF CONFIRMATION OF PLACES

By 30 April 2008, Continental Federations will notify the ITTF of the names of qualified players for the respective continent, in order to determine eligibility for entry to the Final Qualification. Following the conclusion of the Final Qualification event, and by 30 May 2008 at the latest, the ITTF will confirm in writing to NFs/NOCs the names of all qualified players and pairs. By 15 June 2008, NFs/NOCs must submit to the ITTF the names of all participating players and teams, and by 30 June 2008, the ITTF will confirm the final allocation of all quota places.

REALLOCATION OF UNUSED QUOTA POSITIONS

1. ITTF World Ranking List

If a player qualified from the ITTF World Ranking list is not entered by the NOC, the unused quota places will be reallocated to the next highest ranked player from the ITTF World Ranking list.

2. Continental Qualification Tournament/Final World Qualification Tournaments

Any vacant spot created between the Continental Qualification Tournaments and the Final World Qualification Tournament will be filled by the next eligible player from the Continental Qualification List.

If the continental quotas are not filled before the Final World Qualification Tournament, the vacant spots will be filled by increasing the number of qualifiers from the Final World Qualification Tournament.

3. Cancellations of entries before 15 June 2008 and the day prior to the draw. Any vacant spot created between 15 June 2008 and the day prior to the draw will be filled by the highest ranked player playing only in the Team event.

TEAMS

1. Continental quota

In the case of unused Continental quota, the place will be allocated to the next Continental quota team by order of ranking as established in the section "Team Selection".

2. Remaining Teams

Unused quota places for the remaining Teams will be allocated to the next eligible Team available from the Team Ranking list established according to Team qualification system indicated in this document under "Team Selection".

3. Cancellations of entries between 15 June 2008 and 23 July 2008 (date of final entries). Any single vacant spot on a team will be replaced by a player from the same NOC which will play in the Team event only.

4. Cancellation of entries following 23 July 2008 (date of final entries)

If a vacant spot is created in a team due to an injury or other uncontrollable reasons during the Games period between 23 July 2008 (date of final entries) and the day prior to the draw may only be replaced by the highest ranked NOC with 3 players qualified but not participating in the Team event.

Attachment C: USA Table Tennis Code of Conduct

ATHLETE PLEDGE

I pledge to uphold the spirit of the USA Table Tennis Code of Conduct (the "Code"), which offers a guide to my conduct as a member of the 2008 Olympic Team. I acknowledge that I have a right to a hearing if my opportunity to compete is denied or if I am charged with a violation of this Code.

I have familiarized myself with the Code and understand that acceptance of its provisions is a condition of my selection to the 2008 Olympic Team.

As a Member of the Team, I hereby promise and agree that I:

- will abide by all rules related to the Team selection procedures as approved by USA Table Tennis;
- have acted and will act in a sportsmanlike manner consistent with the spirit of fair play and responsible conduct;
- will maintain a level of fitness and competitive readiness that will permit my performance to be at the maximum of my abilities;
will not commit a doping violation as defined by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) or the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rules;

am not currently serving a doping violation and/or do not have a pending or unresolved doping charge;

will not engage in any conduct that is criminal under any laws applicable to me, including, but not limited to laws governing the possession and use of drugs and alcohol and providing of drugs to any person and of alcohol to minors;

am eligible to compete under the rules of International Table Tennis Federation;

will refrain from conduct detracting from my ability or that of my teammates to attain peak performance;

will respect the property of others whether personal or public;

will respect members of my Team, other teams, spectators and officials, and engage in no form of discriminatory behavior or verbal, physical or sexual harassment or abuse;

will follow my Team’s rules, by way of example, rules regarding curfew and required attendance at team meetings;

am aware that USA Table Tennis sponsors, suppliers and licensees provide critical support for the Team and, in recognition of this fact, I will wear designated USA Table Tennis apparel at all official Team functions and events;

will not conceal or cover-up any USA Table Tennis sponsor, supplier or licensee brand or other identification appearing on my USA Table Tennis apparel;

agree to be filmed and photographed by the official photographer(s) and/or network(s) of USA Table Tennis under conditions authorized by USA Table Tennis and give event organizers and USA Table Tennis the right to use my name, picture, likeness, and biographical information before, during and after the period of my participation in these activities to promote the activity in which I participate or to promote the success of the team on which I compete; in no event may USA Table Tennis or the event organizers use or authorize the use of my name, picture, likeness, voice and biographical information for the purpose of trade, including any use in a manner that would imply an endorsement of any company, product, or service, without the prior written consent of the USA Table Tennis (which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld);

will act in a way that will bring respect and honor to myself, my teammates, USA Table Tennis and the United States;

will remember that at all times I am an ambassador for my sport, my country and the Olympic Movement.

PARTICIPANTS’ AFFIRMATION

I have read and accept this Code of Conduct. I agree to the rules, guidelines, jurisdiction and procedures stated in these documents as a condition of being selected to participate as a member of the Team.

Signature

Date

NGB Name

Sport

Relationship (Parent or Guardian)

ATHLETE OMBUDSMAN

I may contact the USOC Athlete Ombudsman, toll free at 888.ATHLETIC (888.284.5383) or John.Ruger@usoc.org for further information regarding my rights under this Code that are not answered by USA Table Tennis.

PARTICIPANTS’ AFFIRMATION

I have read and accept this Code of Conduct. I agree to the rules, guidelines, jurisdiction and procedures stated in these documents as a condition of being selected to participate as a member of the Team.

Signature

Date

NGB Name

Sport

Relationship (Parent or Guardian)

Attachment D

2008 USA Table Tennis

Elite National Team Membership Agreement

This Agreement is entered into by and between USA Table Tennis (“USATT”), a not-for-profit corporation designated by the United States Olympic Committee (“USOC”) as the national governing body for the sport of table tennis and [ ] (the “Athlete”), an athlete member of USATT.

Recitals

A. In furtherance of its duties as the national governing body for the sport of table tennis, USATT selects, trains and funds the Elite National Team to represent the United States in selected national and international competitions. If the Athlete is successful in Team Trials Competition, USATT desires to include the Athlete as a member of the Elite National Team, subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein.

B. The Athlete, a member in good standing of USATT whose performance in USATT competitions qualifies him/her for the Elite National Team, desires to be a part of that Team. As a member of the Elite National Team, the Athlete is willing to devote his/her very best efforts to developing his/her full potential as an athlete representing the United States in national and international competition.

Now, therefore, USATT and the Athlete agree as follows:

I. Athlete’s Obligations. In consideration for his/her selection to, and membership on, USATT’s Elite National Team and the services provided to Athlete by USATT as identified below, Athlete agrees to be bound by each of the following:

A. Eligibility. As long as Athlete remains a member of the National, Olympic, Pan Am or other team, Athlete will not violate any provision of the USATT Bylaws, Code of Conduct, rules, which are in effect during the Term of this Agreement. Likewise, Athlete agrees to abide by and comply with all ITTF, USOC and IOC Rules and Regulations which apply when Athlete is acting on behalf of or representing the Elite National Team and eligibility requirements as interpreted by the respective organization.

B. Training. Athlete agrees to comply with all written training requirements established by the appropriate coach of the Elite National Team or such other individual or group as USATT may designate to coordinate Elite National Team training. Such training may include, but shall not be limited to, participation in Elite National Team training camps for the full duration of those camps and adherence to training schedules and regimens provided for Athlete by the coach or other USATT designee. Athlete further agrees to submit periodic training progress reports as designed by and on a schedule set by USATT or its designee (usually the Elite Athlete Committee and/or a USATT National Team Coach). Athlete further agrees to comply with the team requirements as stated in Addendum I and to participate in all psychological and physical testing as may be required by USATT during the Term of this Agreement. Athlete shall notify the Chair of USATT’s Elite Athlete Committee in writing of any overseas training or competitions in which Athlete independently participates.

C. Competition/Readiness to Compete. Athlete agrees to fully participate in all national or international competitions and exhibitions in which Athlete is requested to participate by USATT, unless Athlete is prevented from so doing by (I) physical injury which has been reported to and confirmed by USATT’s medical designee; (II) a conflict with the rules or requirements of Athlete’s academic institution; or (III) other unforeseen circumstances beyond Athlete’s control which have been reported to and approved by USATT in writing. Athlete shall represent only the United States in national and international competitions. As part of Athlete’s obligations under this paragraph, Athlete agrees to prepare himself/herself fully both physically and psychologically for each competition or exhibition, and to perform to the best of his/her ability. A list of competitions Athlete may be requested to participate in is included in Addendum I.

D. Banned Substances. Athletes must adhere to all IOC, PASO, WADA, ITTF, USADA and USOC anti-doping protocols, policies and procedures. This includes participation in out of competition testing as required by the IOC, PASO, WADA, ITTF, USADA and USOC Rules.

E. Use of Athlete’s Image. Athlete grants to USATT a royalty-free, non-exclusive license to use, reproduce, display, and publicly perform, and to sub-license third parties to use, reproduce, display, and publicly perform, Athlete’s name, likeness, image, voice, biography or any other pertinent information about Athlete in connection with one or more of the following:

1. Promoting the sport of table tennis, Athlete’s achievements, or the work of USATT;

2. Promoting events sponsored or sanctioned by USATT;

3. Creating, promoting and distributing educational or safety materials;


5. Raising funds for USATT through the sale of merchandise (including photographs, posters and prints) with written permission of the athlete; and

6. Allowing a company to identify itself as a national sponsor or official supplier of USATT in advertising or promotions approved by USATT (general release document).

This grant is subject to the condition that the use of Athlete’s name, likeness, image, voice, biography or any other pertinent information about Athlete by a national sponsor or official supplier shall be used only in conjunction with that company’s reference to its status as a Sponsor or Supplier of USATT or the Elite National Team, and not to represent that Athlete, independently of USATT, endorses the national sponsor’s or official supplier’s product or service. Any use, reproduction, display, or public performance made by USATT or its sublicensee pursuant to this paragraph and prior to the termination of this Agreement may continue for the duration of the then-current calendar year or for the duration of any contract entered into by USATT with a sponsor or supplier, whichever is longer.

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Promotion of Elite National Team Activities. Consistent with the training and competition schedules established for Athlete by the appropriate coach of the Elite National Team or such other individual or group designated by USATT, Athlete shall receive all effort to participate in activities designed to teach table tennis skills or to promote the growth of table tennis. Participation in such activities may include, but shall not be limited to, Elite National Team meetings, exhibitions, national and regional congresses, clinics, seminars and sessions with members of the media.

General Responsibilities. Athlete recognizes that as a member of the Elite National Team, he/she is serving as a representative of the thousands of athletes participating in table tennis throughout the United States. Athlete therefore agrees to conduct himself/herself in accordance with principles of good sportsmanship at all times and to abide by USATT's Code of Conduct, the rules and decisions of the Elite Athlete Committee, and, when in residence, the rules of the National Training Center. Athlete will cooperate with and answer questions of the Elite National Team, USATT and Team officials, international officials, sponsors and all other third parties Athlete encounters as a member of the Elite National Team. If Athlete is under the age of eighteen (18) years old and is not yet a high school graduate, Athlete must carry a full high school load and carry a "C" average or above.

Appearances. Athlete shall comply with all USATT written guidelines for appearances whenever appearing or traveling as a member of the Elite National Team, including not performing at any competition, meeting, exhibition, modeling media interviews, public relations activities or as an individual or as a representative of the Elite National Team. Athlete further agrees to wear USATT Elite National Team competition clothing provided by USATT in connection with all international and national events where the Elite National Team is representing the United States or USATT, including without limitation during all competitions, during all travel to and from such competitions, and during all appearances with or on behalf of the Elite National Team or USATT.

Governing Law and Venue. This Agreement is governed by the laws of the State of Colorado. Any suit, claim, action or proceeding brought in connection with this Agreement, USATT, the Athlete shall not be an employee or agent of USATT for any purpose. Any claim for which federal courts have exclusive jurisdiction, then such suit or action must be filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado (in Denver, Colorado).

Other Terms of the Agreement

A. Waiver and Release. The ATHLETE IS FULLY AWARE OF AND APPRECIATES THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPATION IN TABLE TENNIS. The ATHLETE HEREBY RELEASES AND COVENANTS NOT TO SUE USATT AND ITS MEMBERS, SPONSORS, SUPPLIERS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS, OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS IN CONNECTION WITH ANY AND ALL LIABILITY FOR ANY AND ALL LOSS OR DAMAGES OCCURRING AS A RESULT OF ATHLETES PARTICIPATION IN TABLE TENNIS AS A MEMBER OF THE ELITE NATIONAL TEAM.

II. USATT Obligations. In consideration for the Athlete’s agreement to participate fully as a member of USATT’s Elite National Team and to be bound by the terms and conditions of this Agreement, USATT agrees to do each of the following:

A. Media Support. USATT will use reasonable efforts to promote the Elite National Team and its athletes through available media channels.

B. Coaching and Training. USATT will use reasonable efforts to establish a training program designed to assist the Athlete in his/her development as an international table tennis player. This program may include: (i) the employment of Elite National Team coaches, a training coordinator, coaching staff or other individuals designated by USATT to be responsible for this program, (ii) Elite National Team training camps, (iii) the creation of training schedules and programs designed specifically for the Athlete and (iv) psychological and physical testing.

C. Apparel. USATT will provide the Athlete with a complete set of competition apparel, tracksuit and accessories.

D. Competition. USATT may arrange for participation of the Athlete in national and international competitions, promotional appearances and exhibitions to the extent this Agreement permits. USATT will participate in such events, including travel, participating in competitions, exhibitions, meetings, interviews and other activities as may be provided in this Agreement.

E. Travel. USATT will ordinarily pay travel, housing and meal expenses directly associated with the Athlete’s participation in required training camps, competitions and USATT exhibitions, subject to funding allocations and restrictions. The reimbursement will be according to the USATT reimbursement schedule. Costs associated with participation in travel events are the Athlete’s responsibility. USATT will use reasonable efforts to provide an appearance fee to all USATT exhibitions and non-competition events. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as requiring USATT to exceed its budget allocation for the Elite National Team.

F. Insurance. To the extent that the Athlete’s activities on behalf of the Elite National Team are covered by insurance provided by or through the USOC, USATT shall provide insurance coverage for the Athlete when training, competing or otherwise participating in activities as a member of the Elite National Team.

G. Job Opportunities. USATT will use reasonable efforts to work in close cooperation with its sponsors, suppliers and other supporters of table tennis in the United States to identify employment and exhibition opportunities which will allow the Athlete to both work and maintain a training schedule consistent with the Athlete’s development as a table tennis player.

H. USOC Stipend. USATT will recommend to USOC that USOC provide a stipend to some, if not all, members of the Elite National Team. The final decisions as to amount and distribution will be made by USOC and shall not be construed as necessarily reflecting or representing the opinion of USATT, nor shall they create any further obligation on the part of USATT.

III. Other Terms of the Agreement

A. Term and Termination. This Agreement is effective February 15, 2007, and shall continue through and including the selection date of the next Elite National Team. The Agreement may be terminated at any time by the Athlete’s decision to withdraw from the Team or by USATT’s decision to discharge an Athlete from the Team. In addition to the remedies set forth above, USATT may terminate this Agreement in the event that Athlete breaches one or more duties and obligations under this agreement. Termination shall be effective immediately upon written notification by Athlete or USATT.

B. Sanctions. In lieu of discharge or imposition of other penalties by USATT or its designee, USATT may respond to the failure of the Athlete to meet his/her obligations as a member of the Elite National Team by reducing the number of events he/she is eligible to compete in, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her opportunities for competition, reducing his/her 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ADDENDUM 1

Interview with Stellan Bengtsson

1971 World Men's Singles Champion, one zillion other titles • By Tim Boggan

I had a chance to meet briefly with 54-year-old Stellan Bengtsson at the recent USA Nationals, and, once I started the informal questioning, the 1971 World Champion's rapid, articulate responses made for an easy conversation. At the time I hadn't yet seen Table Tennis to Europe again.

And you returned to Sweden when?
In 1970. When I came back, it had been 17 years since any European had won the World's [Sido for Hungary in '53]. I really helped to bring Table Tennis to Europe again.

I know you won the European's after you'd won the 1971 World's, and that you were still an outstanding player into the 1980's when the new Swedish superstars Appelgren and Waldner began their rise. The emphasis on your play must gradually have given way to emphasis on your coaching. Want to mention something about that?
Well, I've worked as a coach for 21 years now. I helped Jorgen Persson, Erik Lindn, [Ulf] “Ticken” Carlsson, Peter Karlsson, and others—I cared, I always wanted to be in the Hall with these players. Later, I spent five years in Denmark helping players like Allan Bentsen and Michael Maze. Recently, I’ve been coaching in Qatar, but it was difficult to find dedicated students there—though with zero tax I could put up with that for a while. I am happy to be in the U.S. now—it’s a place of table tennis promise.

So of course, after all those years of coaching, you feel you’ve quite a bit to offer, right?
Yes, I can educate players and coaches. I know how the Asians play, the Europeans play, and how the Swedes brought the best of East and West together. I can be based at one place, like San Diego, or freelance. I can run clinics in various places, be mobile. But I don’t want to step on anyone’s toes. I just want to get on with the job I love—because after leaving Qatar I’ve never worked so little in table tennis in my whole life.

Naturally, having watched U.S. players, particularly the young ones, you’ve thoughts about them you’d like to share?
I do. You should not be giving kids rating points. The emphasis on winning or losing points is all wrong. Instead of playing to win, they play not to lose. They have to focus on technique. If they want to be good, they have to develop a style that can play all other styles. They have to ask themselves positive questions like, “What did I just win? How important is that?” They have to look ahead, be ambitious. They have to ask again and again, “What do I want to achieve?”

I’m sorry I don’t have more time, Stellan—but could you leave us with some thoughts in general about Coaching?
Well, to pick up from that last question, the aspiring player always asks himself, “Who do I want to beat? And how can I do that?” Coaches have to remember their students aren’t practicing the high jump. Young players have got to get out and play other people, be put in different playing situations. Ideally, the best of them need to play abroad—against tough competition. Also, coaches have to remember there’s no button they can push to get results. Hand-eye coordination is different for every person. And the individual is always at the center of successful coaching.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE • March/April 2007
Juniors of the Month: The Maryland Cadets

By Larry Hodges

Okay, we’re “cheating” a little bit, since half of the six “Maryland Cadets” just left the cadet field, which roughly means under 15, but more specifically means “born on or after Jan. 1, 1992.” Two of the non-cadets (Amaresh Sahu, 15, 2230, and Joseph Wang, 16, 2166) were on the 2006 USA Cadet Team; a third (Reza Ghiasi, 15, 2237) might have been except he’s not a USA citizen; and the other three are all on the 2007 USA Cadet Team (Peter Li, 14, 2280; Marcus Jackson, 15, 2227; and Janice Lan, 1949, 15). Joseph, Marcus, Peter and Janice all just had birthdays in January.

All six started out and practice regularly at the Maryland Table Tennis Center. Most also play at the Baltimore TTC or the Potomac TTC. All started with coaches Cheng Yinghua and/or Jack Huang, and several now also receive coaching from Huang Bang Chao (new MDTTC coach) and Coach Boris Shafir at the Baltimore club.

In recent years, several have spent their summers training in China, and so didn’t go to the Junior Olympics and Junior Nationals. This meant great improvement in their games, but fewer titles.

MDTTC has a large junior program. In addition to these six, there are a total of 39 junior players with USATT ratings over 1500 (out of a total of 204 in the entire country). Some of the others over 1800 include Barbara Wei (17, 2122, was 2171, formerly on USA Cadet and Junior Girls’ Team), Charlie Sun (13, 2078, recently 2132), Chi Zhang (16, 2084), Kevin Ma (14, 2007), Devin Zhang (14, 2003), Kian Mokhtari (16, 1968), Toby Kutler (15, 1956), Max Li (16, 1891), Justin Kung (11, 1879) and Keahan Mokhtari (13, 1824). Since 1992, MDTTC juniors have won more gold medals and more total medals at the Junior Olympics/Junior Nationals than any other state all but three years, winning over half the gold medals during that time.

Amaresh Sahu

Age: 15, born on Oct. 5, 1991
Hometown: Germantown, MD
Current/Highest Rating: 2243/2280

Best Titles:
- 2007 Butterfly MDTTC January Open Singles Semifinalist
- 2006 USA National Cadet Team Member
- 2006 U.S. Open Under 15 Cadet Doubles Finalist
- 2006 Butterfly MDTTC February Open Singles Semifinalist
- 2004 U.S. National Under 14 Junior Olympic Boys’ Singles & Team Champion, Doubles Finalist
- 2004 U.S. Open Under 13 Boys’ Singles Semifinalist
- 2003 Junior Olympics Under 12 Boys’ Singles, Doubles & Team Champion
- 2002 National Under 12 Boys’ Team Champion
- 2001 National Under 10 Boys’ Team Champion
- Best Ranking: #4 Under 16 Boys in 2006

How did you get started in table tennis?
My dad started me getting lessons at the local club, the Maryland Table Tennis Center.

Who are your past and current coaches?
My coaches are Jack Huang and Cheng Yinghua of the MDTTC.

Who do you practice with, and how often?
1 practice with my two coaches, Peter Li, Barbara Wei, Marcus Jackson, Joseph Wang, Reza Ghiasi, as well as other members of our club.

Describe your playing style. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
I play a two-winged looping style. I have good feeling but could improve my footwork.

What are your goals in table tennis?
I want to reach 2400 by the end of this year, make the Junior team this year, and eventually make the national team.

Do you have a favorite player?
I like watching Timo Boll play.

Have you ever trained or competed overseas?
Yeah...I played in China on a U.S. team trip, where Joseph went as well.

What’s the most interesting thing that’s happened to you in table tennis?
Traveling and meeting new people.

What are your interests outside table tennis?
I like soccer and videogames.

Joseph Wang

Age: 16, born on Jan. 26, 1991
Hometown: Gaithersburg, MD
Current/Highest Rating: 2165/2177

Best Titles:
- 2006 USA Cadet National Team Member
- 2006 Junior Olympic Under 16 Boys’ Team Champion, Doubles Runner-up, and Singles Semifinalist
- 2006 Junior Nationals Division A Champion
- 2006 U.S. Open Cadet Boy’s Singles Semifinalist
- 2005 Butterfly MDTTC June Open Singles Semifinalist
- 2003 Junior Nationals Under 14 Boys’ Singles Finalist
- 2002: Junior Nationals Under 12 Boys’ Team Champion
- Best Ranking: #3 Under 14 and #7 Under 16 in 2004

How did you get started in table tennis?
My mother got me involved when I was 9 years old. She had loved playing the sport in her college days in China, and when she heard there was a club in our town (MDTTC) she signed me up for lessons.

Who are your past and current coaches?
My current coach is Cheng Yinghua, but I have received instruction from Sean O’Neill, Larry Hodges, Masaaki Tajima, and of course my mother.

Who do you practice with, and how often?
I try to fit in practice around my school work, but I practice at least four times a week, between 1-4 hours each session. I practice with my mother, my coach Cheng Yinghua, and many players who go to my club.
Describe your playing style. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
I play a strong, offensive shakehand game revolving around a strong forehand smash, but I need to work on some of my defensive skills such as blocking in order to stay in the rally longer.

What are your goals in table tennis?
My short-term goal is to make the National Junior Team for 2007, and to continue making the team while I am still eligible. In the long run I hope to get past 2400 in rating, and perhaps make the U.S. Men's team one year.

Do you have a favorite player?
I'm a fan of Ma Lin even though he plays with a penhold grip, as he has superb serves and probably the best serve-finisher combination in the world.

Have you ever trained or competed overseas?
I have been to China three times over the summer for training, the past year with the cadet team, and two other times on my own. Training overseas is a huge benefit to any developing player, since you can fit almost a year's worth of training in the U.S. into just two months of overseas training. Also, the quality of practice is a lot higher, as 2300+ level players are almost considered standard there. A typical training regimen would be 5-7 hours practice per day 6-7 days every week.

What's the most interesting thing that's happened to you in table tennis?
I would say going overseas and mixing with the foreign players would be the most interesting thing in table tennis for me. It's great to be able to experience the fun of the sport with players from all over the globe.

What are your interests outside table tennis?
I enjoy reading, playing video games, hanging out with friends and swimming.

Marcus Jackson
Age: 15, born on Jan. 12, 1992
Hometown: Riverdale, MD
Current/Highest Rating: 2227/2255
Best Titles/Rankings:
• 2007 USA Cadet National Team Member (#2 on team)
• 2006 Butterfly MDTTC October Open Singles Semifinalist
• 2004 Junior Nationals Under 14 Boys’ Doubles & Team Champion
• 2004 Primary School Boys’ Singles National Champion
• 2004 U.S. Open Under 13 Boys’ Singles Semifinalist
• 2002 Under 12 Junior Olympic Boys’ Singles, Doubles & Team Champion
• 2001 Under 10 Boys’ Singles & Team Junior Olympic Champion, Junior Nationals Runner-up
• Best Ranking: #1 Under 14 Boys, #3 Under 16 Boys, Jan/Feb 2006

How did you get started in table tennis?
My dad used to take me to the Gaithersburg club when I was around 5-6 years old. And I wanted to play but the coaches said I was too young. They said when I was around 7 years old was a good age to start.

Who are your past and current coaches?
My past coach was Cheng Yinghua. My current coaches are Boris Shafir, coach of the 1988 Russian Olympic Team, and Jack Huang, former Chinese National Team member.

Who do you practice with, and how often?
I practice with Vladimir Poradich once a week for three hours on Saturdays, with Boris Shafir instructing both of us. I practice with Larry Abass, John Wetzler, Raghu Nadmichettu, Barbara Wei and Qassim Aziz over the weekends. During the week I get one lesson with Boris and one with Jack Huang, each for an hour. I play on an average of 4-5 days a week.

Describe your playing style. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
My style is all-around attacker. One of my strengths is my looping. A weakness which I am working on is that I rush sometimes when I play.

What are your goals in table tennis?
My goal is to represent the United States in the Olympics.

Do you have a favorite player?
My favorite player is Timo Boll of Germany.

Have you ever trained or competed overseas?
I have not trained or competed overseas yet, but I plan to in the near future.

What’s the most interesting thing that’s happened to you in table tennis?
The most interesting that has happened to me is that I have met so many people from all over the United States and that has helped me gain good public relations skills.

Peter Li
Age: 14, born on Jan. 19, 1993
Hometown: Laurel, MD
Current/Highest Rating: 2263/2301
Best Titles:
• 2007 USA Cadet National Team Member
• 2006 USA Nationals Under 18 Boys’ Singles Final Four (at age 13)
• 2006 Butterfly MDTTC June Open Singles Semifinalist
• 2006 Butterfly MDTTC February Open Singles Finalist
• 2005 Butterfly MDTTC April Open Singles Finalist
• 2003 Under 12 Boys’ Doubles & Team Champion, Junior Olympic Finalist
• 2003 Elementary School Boys’ Singles Champion
• 2002: Under 10 Junior Olympic and Junior Nationals Boys’ Singles, Doubles & Team Champion
• Best Ranking: #2 in Under 14 Boys, #1 in Under 12 and Under 10 Boys.

How did you get started in table tennis?
I got started in table tennis because I used to watch my dad, Ming Li, play table tennis at the Potomac Table Tennis Club and I tried table tennis out and I liked it.

Who are your past and current coaches?
My past and current coaches are Cheng Yinghua and Jack Huang.

Who do you practice with, and how often?
I practice with Joseph Wang about once a week, with Raghu Nadmichettu and Amresh Sahu.
Describe your playing style. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
My playing style is mostly a fast close to the table style, looping from both sides mostly close to the table. My strengths are my backhand is pretty good and I am pretty quick. My weaknesses are that I don’t have that much power and my forehand is not so strong.

What are your goals in table tennis?
My goals in table tennis are to make the USA Cadet, Junior, and Men’s Team many times, and make the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team.

Do you have a favorite player?
I don’t have a specific favorite player but I like Jan-Ove Waldner and Kong Linghui.

Have you ever trained or competed overseas?
I have trained overseas three times in Fujian Province, China, over the past three summers. The first time was for one month, and the second and third times for two months. In China, it was like a training camp with practices in the morning and afternoon, consisting of multi-ball, physical workout, single ball, and matches.

What's the most interesting thing that has happened to you in table tennis?
Probably training in China. The training in China was hard, but fun and every year when I have to leave I wished I could stay longer.

What are your interests outside table tennis?
My interests outside of table tennis is hanging out with my friends and playing different sports like basketball for fun, watching TV.

Reza Ghiasi
Age: 15, born on Oct. 26, 1996, in Tehran, Iran
Immigrated to U.S. in 2001
Hometown: Gaithersburg, MD
Current/Highest Rating: 2237/2237
Best Titles:
• 2006 Quaker City Open Under 18 Boys’ Singles Champion
• 2006 Butterfly MDTTC April Open Singles Semifinalist
• 2005 Garden State Open Under 16 Champion
• Best Ranking: #8 in Under 16 Boys in 2006

How did you get started in table tennis?
Back in Iran, when I was about 7 years old, my dad used to coach my sister at my grandparent’s house where he had made a little club, and other players would come and play games. I used to watch them playing for hours almost everyday, and I wanted to start playing, because it looked fun and exciting. But, unfortunately, I was too short, and they wouldn’t let me play.

After we immigrated to the U.S., I started going to the MDTTC club with my dad, and one time, I just picked up a racket and played with myself. After a while, when my dad saw me improving, and realized how interested I was, he let me take lessons.

Who are your past and current coaches?
My past coach was Cheng Yinghua, and my current coach is Cheng Yinghua, former member of Chinese national team and the head coach of Szechuan Province of China from 1987-88. One of my newer coaches who has been coaching me since last year is Boris Shifir, coach of the 1988 Russian Olympic Team. I also get lessons from Huang Bang Chao, who is a new coach at MDTTC.

Who do you practice with, and how often?
I get lessons from Cheng Yinghua two times a week for two hours. I also get a 30 minute lesson from Boris at the Baltimore Table Tennis Club, which is about an hour drive from my house. I practice with MDTTC juniors such as Marcus Jackson, Amarsh Salu, Peter Li, Joseph Wang, Charlie Sun, and others when I have time. I also play matches at the Baltimore TTC on Saturday morning, and play in the junior camps at MDTTC on Saturdays and Sundays.

Describe your playing style. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
I am an all-around attacker. My strength is my forehand loop, and my weakness is my backhand loop and my short game, which I’m working on.

What are your goals in table tennis?
My goals in table tennis is to go to the Olympics and represent my country. I also like to make table tennis more popular and show the people that don’t play table tennis that it’s not just about moving your hand your racket, there is really a lot more to it than just that.

Do you have a favorite player?
My favorite player is Jan-Ove Waldner of Sweden. Even though he is not as young anymore, he still has a good control and he is a very solid player. My other favorite players are Kreama of Greece, and Timo Boll of Germany.

Have you ever trained or competed overseas?
No I haven’t, but I would love to train somewhere in Europe or China.

What’s the most interesting thing that’s happened to you in table tennis?
The most interesting thing that has happened to me in table tennis is that I have made a lot of friends from all over the country and some of them have become my really good friends that I hang out with. Table tennis is also a very great adventure for me, and I get to travel to other states and attend different tournaments and it’s really fun. The sport also teaches me great lessons that I can use in life, such as, concentrating, being confident, and controlling my emotions.

What are your interests outside table tennis?
My interest outside of table tennis is hanging out with my friends, going to the movies, parties, talking on the phone, listening to music, watching TV, going online and chatting. I also like playing football and soccer in my spare time. Oh yeah, SLEEPING AND EATING is a BIG hobby of mine!

What is your opinion about the current hostilities between the United States and Iran? What is most interesting about living in the U.S.?
Well what can I say? Politics is politics, you can’t change anything about that and everyone has their own opinion on this. But I think that all of these hostilities going on, not only in Iran, in other countries too, is pointless and they should all make peace. One of the things that most impressed me about coming to the U.S. is that people really have NO IDEA what’s happening on the other side of the world. One time one of my friends asked me, “do you guys have TV in Iran...?” I mean, it’s just funny how some people have no idea. The culture here also impressed me a lot because it was really different than what I was used to, but thankfully, I had no problem fitting in and getting used to the culture.

Janice Lan
Age: 15, born on Jan. 19, 1992
Hometown: Germantown, MD
Current/Highest Rating: 1953/1953
How did you get started in table tennis? Like many other Chinese people, my parents liked to play table tennis for fun. For several years I occasionally played for fun at home with my family. Then, when I was almost 10 years old, my parents decided to let my brother and I try some lessons with Coach Jack Huang at MDTTC. After a few lessons, I decided that I liked table tennis and so I kept on playing.

Who are your past and current coaches? Jack Huang is my main past and current coach, and my other coaches are Cheng Yinghua, Boris Shafrir, and Huang Bang Chao.

Who do you practice with, and how often? Every week I have a lesson with Jack and a lesson with Boris, which are one hour each. I also practice with other club members at MDTTC during weekly camps and leagues for 4-6 hours a week, as well as at the Baltimore Club on Saturday for about 2 hours. Sometimes I also practice at home with either my dad or my brother whenever I have extra time.

Describe your playing style. What are your strengths and weaknesses? I'm an all-around looper. I would say that my loop and consistency are my strengths, and my defense and lack of power are my weaknesses.

What are your goals in table tennis? For my short-term goals, I want to get my rating around 2100 soon and 2100 by the end of this year. In the future I'd like to make the Olympics and become a national champion.

Do you have a favorite player? My favorite player is probably Zhang Yining because her technique is amazing and she is the #1 female player, but I also admire basically all the other top Chinese players since they are all excellent players.

Have you ever trained or competed overseas? No, I have never trained or competed overseas, although I am hoping to do so this year.

What's the most interesting thing that's happened to you in table tennis? I think that the most interesting thing about table tennis overall is the chance to travel a lot and meet many people.

What are your interests outside table tennis? Besides table tennis, I enjoy playing the piano and the violin, which I have been playing for 8 and 4 years respectively. I also like to read, chat online, and hang out with friends.

What are your interests outside table tennis? Besides table tennis, I enjoy playing the piano and the violin, which I have been playing for 8 and 4 years respectively. I also like to read, chat online, and hang out with friends.
strong players in Connecticut, and sometimes I play in Queens, NY, where the level is high. I also always play in the Westfield, NJ tournaments where the competition is strong. Wetzler: I have been greatly helped by the strong competition at the Baltimore TTC, playing very good players on a regular basis has helped all of us at the club raise the level of our games.

McAfee: I have been dealing with a degenerative arthritic condition since I was about forty years old. About a year ago the pain got to the point where I was either going to have to stop playing or find a new style of play that would not require as much movement or use of my legs to generate power. I decided to try a close to the table defensive blocking game using long and short pips. After about six months of hard work, my results started improving. My new style allows me to better use my hand skills which are still quite good. However, the amount of improvement in my rating has been a big surprise to me. Personally, the most fun I have had with my new style is that I can now play a couple of matches without so much pain. Table Tennis is fun again.

**What were your best wins in your recent rise?**

DeWitt: In Baltimore I beat two strong players from Japan, both near 2400. The two highest rated U.S. players I beat were Richard Doughman and TJ Beebe, both around 2375, and both a bit out of training. There were many other exciting matches.

Wetzler: At the Baltimore teams my best wins were Bang Chao Huang (2625) and Hao He (2490). I played very well at the teams, in addition to my wins I also had a number of very close losses to very strong players.

McAfee: I was very pleased to pull out a tough match against Atli Elliott in the semifinals of the recent Colorado Springs Open. Her classic short pips-out penhold style of play is very effective against my style. In Baltimore, I was 18-1 but most of my wins were against lower-rated players. At the Nationals, my best wins were against David Sakai, Barry Dattel, and Thor Trueason. I also defeated a couple of really good juniors in Alden Fan and Timothy Wang. However, Dan Seemiller really took my game apart in the semifinals of the Over 40 Singles and Barry defeated me the second time we played in the quarterfinals of Under 2300.

**What were your best past titles or wins?**

DeWitt: I think my best result, other than Baltimore, was making the quarterfinals at the Cary Cup in North Carolina, where I beat Brian Pace. Once I beat eight 2200 players in one tournament. I also won the Under 2375 event at a NATT event. Two other big wins for me were Lily Yip and David Fernandez (although David was sick at the time).

Wetzler: Best Finishes: Semifinals, Over 40 Men's Singles at USA Nationals, and Semifinals Garden State Open (4-star tournament, defeated De Tran and Paul David).

Best Wins: Todd Sweeirs (2659), Ernesto Euben (2512), Xavier Therien (2482), Brian Pace (2466), Freddie Gabriel (2452), Sean O'Neill (2442).

McAfee: Most of my serious training and play occurred in the 1960's and 1970's. In the early 1970's I won many Open Singles Titles throughout the Southeast. This included the Southeast Open Singles and Doubles Title and the Southern Collegiate Singles Title. In 1973, I defeated in tournament play both U.S. Champion D.J Lee and U.S. #2 John Tannahill.


**Describe your playing style. What are your strengths and weaknesses?**

DeWitt: I have a good flat backhand counter and block and I create dead balls on both sides. My weakness is a lack of power.

Wetzler: I use Bryce 2.1 on forehand and Phantom 007 on backhand (long pips), I play offensive on the forehand side and defensive on the backhand. I use my backhand to try and set up my forehand loop and attack. My strengths are my forehand loop, my experience and ability to find my opponents' weaknesses and exploit them and never giving up no matter what the score. Weaknesses: Footwork, and at times being too passive and content to win with just defense.

McAfee: My current style of play is a close-to-the-table defensive player. Using long pip blocks, I try to force my opponents into errors. I will also attack any loose return.

**Any tips for other prospective senior (or non-senior) stars?**

DeWitt: My advice is if you are going to do drills, do ones that are applicable to game situations. Also play with a variety of players so you get used to different styles.

Wetzler: You don't have to be quicker, stronger or younger than your opponent, there is definitely something to be said for experience and the ability to adapt your game to best counter your opponent. Also, continue to set goals and work toward them. Almost all of my best wins and my highest rating have come after the age of 40.

McAfee: I think that it is important for seniors to evaluate their style of play on a regular basis as they get older. You do need to make changes to compensate for changes in your physical ability.

**Anything else to add?**

DeWitt: On a non table tennis note I was robbed recently. They stole my TV and telephone, which delayed this interview. Hopefully I will have the opportunity to play the Baltimore Team tournament on a team consisting of My Father, My son and Myself. As far as I know we are the only Grandfather, Father and Son team to play.

Richard McAfee, could you tell us about your USA coaching, and your ITTF coaching?

McAfee: My primary focus within the sport has been coaching for the last 25+ years. I was always a better coach than player. I produced my first U.S. Junior Champion in the early 1970's and have coached many players to U.S. and International Titles and rankings. In 1989-91, I was the Director for the U.S. Eastern Training Center in Maryland. From 1991-95, I was the Head Coach for the Anderson College Table Tennis Team that produced three U.S. Collegiate Men's Singles Champions. In 1995, I moved to Atlanta, to serve as the Competition Manager for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. While in Atlanta from 1995-2005, I was the Head Coach for the Atlanta Junior Development Program that produced a number of top U.S. Juniors. Currently, I coach at the Aurora Table Tennis Club in Aurora, CO. In addition, in the last few years, I have been working with the ITTF's Development Program as a Coaching Course Conductor. I have conducted nine courses, training coaches in countries around the World.

[Editor's note: See McAfee's article on page 64, "How To Get the Most Out of Your Tournament Experience." ]
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Introduction By Larry Hodges

A record turnout of 888 players congregated here in Las Vegas for the USA Nationals. An additional 86 were in the U.S. Paralympics, for a total of 974 players. A special thanks goes to everyone for this great turnout, and to the USATT and NATT staff for another well-run, on-time event.

1971 World Champion Stellan Bengtsson (see interview this issue, as well as in last issue), now living and coaching in San Diego, pointed out that the U.S. hasn’t been able to develop a national champion in years. And he’s right; for the 31st consecutive year (ever since the first USA Nationals in 1976), a foreign-born and foreign-developed player won Women’s Singles: former Koreans He-Ja Lee three times and Insook Bhushan even times; former Yugoslavian Jasna Reed two times; former Chinese Julie Ou one time; Wei Wang one time; Amy Feng four times, Gao Jun eight times, and now Wang Chen one time. On the men’s side, a foreign-born and foreign-trained player won Men’s Singles for the 12th time in 13 years, with the lone exception Eric Owens in 2001. Former Yugoslavian Iljja Lupulesku won three times, former Chinese Cheng Yinghua won four times; and former Chinese David Zhuang won here for the fifth time. Nothing against these great players (with citizenship required since 1998), but when will the U.S. start developing players who can win these titles? Of course, even older star players from countries like China are nearly unbeatable almost anywhere else.

Currently, players such as Iljja Lupulesku (39, 2776), David Zhuang (43, 2673) and Cheng Yinghua (48, 2669) still mostly “rule the roost,” with only Mark Hazinski (21, 2623) really challenging them, although youth stars Han Xiao (19, 2587) and Adam Hugh (18, 2510) are pretty close. Perhaps a team match could be set up, the seniors versus the up-and-comers, played over and over until the seniors lose!

Between matches in the various finals, the Swaythling Cup International Sportsmanship Award was given to Judy Hugh, while the Dr. Michael Scott Award for Excellence in Umpiring was given to Saul Weinstein.

Women’s Singles Takes Women’s Singles!

The top four seeds in women’s singles (Wang Chen 2605, Jasna Reed 2477, Tawny Banh 2425 and Nan Li 2399) were seeded to the quarterfinals. The rest played in four preliminary groups, with the #1 finisher in each group advancing to the quarterfinals.

Group One: Top seed Yao Xi “Crystal” Huang (2384) won both her matches, but had an 8-9,9-13,9 struggle with #3 Atha Fong (2141). Atha upset #2 Svetlana Panich (2154) to come in second - but only once advanced, and Crystal, with a 4,5,6 win over Panich, advanced.

Group Two: U.S. Junior Girls’ #1 Judy Hugh was top seed at 2330, but she lost a close 2,-11,2,-8 match to #2 Heather Wang (2202). However, Heather then lost to #3 seed Gina Dole (2048), 9,-13,5,6, who lost to Judy, 11,-8,5,10. In the tie-breaker (game record among the three), Judy was 5-4, Gina 4-4, and Heather 4-5, so Judy advanced, with Gina coming in second, Heather third.

Group Three: #1 seed Jackie Lee (2326) won all three matches, with a difficult 9,7,-9,8 win over #2 Simone Yang (2238). In a three-way tie for second, Simone defeated Ariel Hsing (29) who defeated Barbara Wei (2074) who defeated Simone, with Simone coming out in second, Barbara third, Ariel fourth.

Group Four: #2 seed Diane Chen (2287) upset #1 seed Whitney Ping (2323) at 8,8,6 to advance.

Quarterfinals

Wang Chen d. Diane Chen, 7,4,2,6

Diane Chen was five-time champion of the Heilongjiang Province in China, and a member of the province team from 1977-87, but that was as a pips-out penholder. She was also the 1985 Chinese Team Champion, finished third in mixed doubles at the Chinese Nationals in 1983, and made the Final 16 in singles one year. After ten years away from the game (returning in 2005), she’d returned, but now as a shakehand with short pips on both sides. There were some nice rallies, but the lefty Chen, against the righty Wang Chen (also with pips on the backhand) wasn’t steady enough in the battle of the Chens.
Nan Li d. Huang Yao “Crystal” Xi, 4,9,10,-10,9

It was another pips-out battle. Nan Li has medium pips on the backhand, while the lefty penholder Crystal uses pips on her forehand, with an inverted reverse penhold backhand. Nan easily won game one. In game two, Nan led 10-6 before pulling it out, 11 -9. In game three, Crystal led 10-9, but Nan did a gutsy serve & smash to deuce the game and win, 12-10, in what was probably the key point in the match. In game four, it was 9-7 for Crystal, then 9-all, then 10-9, finally 12-10. In game five, Nan kept leading, and Crystal kept coming back. Nan led 4-1, then 4-all; then it was 9-5 for Nan, then 9-8, 10-8, and finally 11-9. Said Nan’s coach, Stefan Feth, “She played very high level today. It’s her first win over Crystal. They’ve played several times, and each time it’s been closer. The games were very close today, but Nan won the close points.”

Tawny Banh d. Judy Hugh, -6,-8,-12,3,3,3,9

What a match! Junior star Judy Hugh could not miss for three games as she attacked and out-steadied the veteran Tawny’s blitzing pips-out backhand attack and over-the-table forehand loops. Judy is an all-around player who can do it all – looping, hitting and blocking from both wings. (Her backhand loop is especially impressive.) And then, starting in game four, Tawny raised her level, and suddenly, for three straight 11-3 games, her blitzkrieg attacks did not miss as she outscored Judy 33-9. And so it went to the final game. Tawny continued to dominate, going up 8-4, and then 10-7 match point. Judy pulled out a serve which Tawny awkwardly flipped off. Then Tawny served & looped in the net, and it was 10-9 in the seventh. Now it was Tawny’s turn to pull out a tricky serve, which Judy mis-hit off the edge of her racket as she tried to backhand loop – and so the veteran was into the semifinals.

Jasna Reed d. Jackie Lee, 8,-8,9,-8,6

Every game was a battle, with the fastest rallies of the quarterfinals. Each game went to the end, but Jasna’s seemed to pull out the big shots when she needed them.

And so, just as with the men, the top four seeds in Women’s Singles were into the Final Four.

Semifinals: Wang Cheng vs. Nan Li, Jasna Reed vs. Tawny Banh

After the excitement of the quarterfinals, the semifinals were a letdown, as Wang Chen downed Nan Li 6,7,1,2 (I talked to someone for a minute or so and missed the entire third game), and Jasna Reed, hungry for a win, ate and ate and ate and ate in defeating Tawny Banh, 8,8,8,8.

Final: Wang Chen vs. Jasna Reed

It was a classic match-up of the steady and yet powerful Wang Chen (#1 seed), with her powerful pips-out backhand and forehand looping & smashing, and Jasna Reed, #2 seed, with her spectacular loops and smashes from both wings. At times Jasna was on fire, smashing backhand smashes seemingly at will; however, most of the time Wang won with steady countering. “She seemed a bit out of practice, after three shots she usually missed,” Wang said. Jasna was a bit out of practice as she had been focusing on her coaching duties at Texas Wesleyan University. Plus, since all the tables outside the arena had been picked up already, “I didn’t have a table to warm up on!” Jasna said.

Wang led game one 8-6, then it was 8-all, then 11-8 for Wang. In game two, Jasna led 6-4, then it was 6-10 as Wang won 11-7. In game three, Wang jumped to a 6-0 lead. Jasna smacked a ball out of the court and was yellow carded. On the very next point, she smacked a ball off the edge of her racket, and it smacked into the umpire’s head! (No, it couldn’t have been intentional, not off the racket edge. Jasna’s not THAT good, is she?) Jasna walked over and apologized.

Down 0-2 in games and 0-7 in the third, Jasna found some new life, and began smashing in winners, and suddenly it was 4-7. Then it was 4-10, 5-11 as Wang won game three. Wang led 5-4 in the fourth, and ran off six in a row. (Jasna tried chopping at 9-4, and intentionally missed a wild backhand kill at 10-4). Match and Championship to Wang Chen, 8,7,5,4. “She’s a top player in the world, and I’m just a recreational player,” Jasna said, rather modestly. “What can I expect?”

“I played Jasna once, in 1997, where I won,” Wang said. “Here she took a lot of risky shots. She also had trouble with some of my serves.” Wang, who was ranked #4 in the world a few years ago while playing for China (but was now a USA citizen), had basically stopped playing for a couple of years as she focused on coaching, but was now training regularly in New York City, mostly with Paul David, sometimes with chopper Kazuyuki Yokoyama. She said she plans to train full-time for the Olympics. She recently trained and played some in Germany, and expects to train in China or Europe some next year.
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Men's Singles By Larry Hodges

Early Rounds

The first two rounds of Men's Singles were played on Thursday. The big upset in round two, was #5 seeded (2589 rated) Barney J. Reed's loss to De Tran (2411). Dr. De (yes, he's a medical doctor and a former USA team member) came from behind in this battle of lefties, -2,8,-4,-8,7,7.

There was a minor upset where Loc Ngo (2360) won over former USA junior star/Pan Am Team member Chi-Sun Chui (who's been living in Hong Kong for a number of years as a stock trader in the Hong Kong stock market), -12.,2,-10,8,2.10. Freddie Gabriel (2492) had a struggle with Puerto Rican star Joseph Dibbs (2360), 7,-7,5,-8,10,8. USA Men's Coach Dan Seemiller was scheduled to play his student AJ Brewer. AJ, however, was in a busy schedule in the Cadet Team Trials (he'd make the team) and defaulted.

Lefties Galore: When lefty Barney J. Reed (#5 seed) lost in the 16ths in the top quarter of the draw, he lost to lefty De Tran. De then lost to lefty Darko Rop, who then lost to lefty Lupulesku, who the round before had defeated lefty Loc Ngo, who the round before had defeated lefty Lim Ming Chui. In the round of 16, all four players in the first quarter were lefties, as well as two in the second quarter (Dan Seemiller and Richard Lee). In the bottom half of the draw, all eight players were righties.

8ths

Khoa Nguyen, 40, was inducted into the USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame the night before (Thursday night). So at least there was that consolation as he became the second top seed to fall. Seeded 7th, Khoa, rated 2583, faced Samson Dubina. Samson's rated "only" 2421, but has been training with the Canadian team for the past year at their training center, practicing with players such as Wilson Zhang, Pradeeban Peter-Paul and others. Plus, the only other time the two had played had been at the Western Open in Berkeley in February, where Samson had upset Khoa, 4-3. This time was similar, with Samson the aggressor throughout. "He missed a lot of shots," Samson said. Of his own game, he said, "I'm blocking better than before. Before, when someone attacked, I always missed. Now I feel like I can block well. Also, Khoa plays a lot like the Canadians I practice with — killer forehands, average backhands for their level." Match to Samson, -8,9,2,9,-9,6.

8ths results, from the top of the draw:

- Ilja Lupulesku d. Loc Ngo, 6,5,4,4
- Darko Rop d. De Tran, 6,8,10,9
- Shao Yu d. Richard Lee, 7,8,8,6
- Cheng Yinghua d. Dan Seemiller, 1,6,5,7
- Mark Hazinski d. Nison Aronov, 7,6,7,-5,6
- Han Xiao d. Freddie Gabriel, 9,-7,5,6,4
- Samson Dubina d. Khoa Nguyen, -8,9,2,9,-9,6
- David Zhuang d. Jiachen David Wang, 3,4,7,7

Quarterfinals

Ilja Lupulesku d. Darko Rop, 6,4,8,6

Ilja was a topspinner's delight, pure counterlooping and fishing all the way, but the result was never in doubt. Often Darko would rip forehand after forehand, but Ilja's invincible topspin defense was ... invincible, at least in this match.

Cheng Yinghua d. Shao Yu, 7,9,9,4

Shao plays right up at the table with a vicious pips-out backhand hit that few can keep up with. Cheng is one of the few USA players who can back up and topspin from both wings against this shot. Yet, when Shao gets hot, he can be unstoppable at times. In game two, he led 9-6 before losing five in a row. In game three, down 10-4, he made it to 10-9 before another hard backhand kicked the net and went off.
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Mark Hazinski d. Han Xiao, 10,9,8,4,9

This was almost a replay of their earlier Under 21 Men’s final, where Mark won 3-2. Once again Mark won the big points, with Han leading at the end of nearly every game. Han’s close-to-the-table looping, especially with his backhand, often dominates play as he ends the points quickly with off-the-bounce loops, often going on runs where no lead is safe. Mark can end the point at any time with sheer power from both wings, plus he wins most counterlooping rallies. Yet, the key to the match was Mark’s composure under pressure, while Han often seemed more nervous.

When I asked about it, Han said, “A lot of people say I look nervous, but I don’t think I’m that nervous. The problem is that I make a lot of bad tactical decisions at the end of games because I don’t have confidence in what worked before. When I played Mark, I had a serve that was giving him trouble over and over. When I served at 9-all, I didn’t use it. That was a bad mistake.”

In game one, Mark jumped to an 8-1 lead – then Han reeled off eight in a row (the last with an edge ball) to serve with a 9-8 lead. In game two, Han served leading 8-6. In game three, Mark led 6-1 only to see Han go on another run, this time scoring seven in a row to lead 8-6. Han dominated game four, 11-4. In game five, Han served up 9-7. “When it’s 9-all, balls that hit earlier always go two inches off,” Han said. In the end, Mark outscored Han 49-47. A closer look gives a better outlook. In the four games that were close, all won by Mark, Han led 9-8, 8-6, 8-6 and 9-7 – and was outscored the rest of the way 18-2.

David Zhuang d. Samson Dubina, -9,5,9,5,5

This really was two matches – the first three games, where a pair of 2650 players went at it, and the last two, where David upped the ante to 2700, while Samson dropped back to the sub-2600 strata. For three games, the two went at it at full pace. The harder pips-out penholder David blocked or hit, the better Samson seemed to loop from both wings. Samson led most of the first game, and was at 9-all in the third. What did David do differently the last two games? “In the first game, I was trying to get comfortable. I was still having trouble reading the ball in the thinner air, and he was playing really well. In the last two games, I played with more control. He’s better when I go at him fast.” With the change of pace with more steady side-to-side blocks, the hard blocks became more effective, and in the last two games Samson made far more mistakes than before.

And so the top four seeds in Men’s Singles are the Final Four.

Semifinals
Ilja Lupulesku vs. Cheng Yinghua

Would the 48-year-old Cheng, four-time champion here, have a chance against the top-seeded 39-year-old Lupulesku? Both age and styles were against Cheng, who generally is best against players who stay at the table, and isn’t normally as good against lefties. Lupulesku is a lefty who plays almost exclusively off the table topspin. He also has a very nice return of serve. Cheng is more all-around, able to stay at the table and block or loop from either wing.

In game one, Lupi almost ran away with it, leading 6-1. Then it was 9-8, with Cheng mixing in blocks and loops to keep Lupi on the defensive and off-balance, often looping soft when Lupi was off the table to bring him in. At the end, Lupi forced Cheng to do what Lupi does best – counterloop – and he won the last two points and game one, 11-8.

But Cheng quickly showed he knew how to play Lupi, keeping him close to the table until he saw a ball to rip, and he led 10-8 in the pivotal moment of the match. Cheng missed a flip, a loop, and twice Lupi got him into counterlooping points – and Lupi took a 2-0 lead as he won 12-10.

Cheng’s attack and counterlooping picked up in game three as he won 11-8. However, at this point, you could almost see Lupi getting more comfortable against Cheng’s two-winged loops, and his spins began to take their toll as he ran away with game four, 11-6. Game five was more of the same as Lupi completely dominated as Cheng missed, while Lupi began attacking more. Up 10-2, Lupi moves into the final, 8,10, 8,6,4.

David Zhuang vs. Mark Hazinski

Would it be a “passing of the torch,” with the 21-year-old Mark against the 43-year-old David? Not this time.

You could almost see the confidence rising in David Zhuang as the match went on, with his blocks and sudden attacks getting steadier and more...
crisp. He used an arsenal of serves, constantly varying his motions and tosses. Mark often attacked David's short serves with over-the-table wristy backhand loops, similar to the technique USA Men's Coach Dan Seemiller spoke about at the USAATT Coaching Seminar the day before. While David served mostly short, with mixed in deep serves, Mark often challenged David with deep serves. David has extremely good touch and a good flip off short serves, but against long serves his short pips is a disadvantage. The rallies are difficult to describe as David constantly changed things up, so every rally seemed different.

In the first, Mark had served off at 9-8 and 12-all, yet had managed to win, 15-13. But this wasn't the Mark from last year who'd overpowered the field in making it to the final against Lupulesku. His shots seemed more erratic, unable to win the long rallies or consistently put the ball away. At 8-all in the second, David won three in a row, with Mark missing a series of backhand loops at the end as David varied the pace. In the third, David led 10-8, but Mark looped one, and won a long rally when David smashed off, and it was 10-all. But David won a blocking rally, and Mark backhand looped off again as David went up 2-1 in what was probably the pivotal game of the match.

Game four was an easy 5-3, 9-3, 11-6 win for David. In game five, Mark led 8-6. David won both points on his serve, 8-all; Mark won both points on his serve to go up 10-8. At 10-9, Mark smashed a ball to David's wide forehand, a seeming game-winner, but David somehow lunged and made a miracle return, which a seemingly surprised Mark missed - 10-all! David then leads 11-10, 12-11, 13-12 and 14-13. Strangely, the receiver won all seven points after deuce, and now Mark is receiving. He misses a backhand kill, and David is in the final, -13,8,10,6,13.

Final: Ilija Lupulescu vs. David Zhuang

David had upset Lupi in the semifinals here two years ago, but didn't have to play him last year as Zhuang lost to Cheng Yinghua. Lupi's won here in 2002, 2003 and 2005, while David's won five times, the last time in 2000. He's now 43 -- can he still win? Of course, Cheng won at age 46 two years ago -- so age doesn't matter! Not if David has any say, and say he does!

David is very comfortable against Lupi's style, and has a long history of beating lefthies, often with angled cross-court blocks to the forehand followed by down-the-line blocks to the backhand. "He loves to play Lupi," said coach and wife Joannie Fu. "I don't think Lupi likes to play David, with all the tricky shots David does." David's arm is bothering him, yet this is a "good" thing, since David's been bothered with injuries all year, and this is about the healthiest he's been. When asked about David's various muscle injuries, Joannie just shook her head, saying, "Too much." Because of the injuries, he hasn't really trained much this year, mostly just coaching.

As in his semifinal match, David is constantly varying his serve, from super-high toss forehand serves to quick, short-toss backhand serves, and seemingly everything in between. Lupi serves forehand pendulum serves over and over, with constant variation in spin and depth. He likes to toss the ball backwards when he serves, and some think his service toss is not "near vertical," as the rules require, but it's a subjective decision.

The match starts out almost a rout, with David going up 5-0 in the first, winning 11-5. David leads 10-7 in the second, and Lupi's looking sluggish. Then it's 10-all, and we have a match. Lupi has his chance, leading 11-10 when David blocks off, but David dribbles Lupi's serve over the net, an unreturnable ace, 11-all. David blocks a few, then smashes, 12-11. Then Lupi serves, and David catches him with a quick shot to the backhand, and Lupi, stepping around too slowly, awkwardly loops it off, 13-11.

Game three is the best game as both are at their best. The rallies are long, with David blocking and smashing point after point, with Lupi running everything down. He gets to just about everything, and wins the game with some of the most incredible points, 11-8, but the game may have cost him the match -- Lupi is noticeably exhausted now.

David goes up 4-0 in the fourth against a very tired Lupi. Yet Lupi's not through, slowly comes back and ties it at 8-all. Three points later, and David has won again, 11-8, to go up 3-1. Is it over? 6-0 for Lupi in the fifth says no as he romps to an 11-6 win.

In the sixth, once again David pulls away, leading 6-3. Lupi is obviously tired, and David is "punishing" him, blocking fast and quick, side to side, making Lupi move. Lupi is running everything down and attacking when he can, and ties it at 6-all. Then it's 9-6 for David, then 10-7, and when Lupi loops David's serve off, David's arm is raised, is sprinting toward his wife, where they embrace. The 43-year-old David Zhuang has won his fifth Men's Singles National title (tying Dan Seemiller and Sean O'Neill), 5,11, -8,8,-6,7.
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Youth & Juniors By Larry Hodges

Under 22

The top two seeds in Under 22 Men, Mark Hazinski and Han Xiao, were not challenged in reaching the final where they faced off in a best of five. It started as a near rout for the blitzing Han, whose over-the-table backhand loop dominated. Game one to Han, 11-5, and a 6-0 lead in game two. Then it was 7-3 and 7-5. Mark missed an easy pop-up, says “Oh my God,” and from there on, except for a Han rip off of Mark’s serve at 8-all, it’s all Mark, ripping from both wings while Han’s missing, 11-9. Mark continues his run, going up 9-4 in the third (that’s a 20-7 run), then holds off Han’s comeback, 11-8. In the fourth, Han’s hot again, takes the lead and holds it to 11-8. In the fifth, Han’s on the attack, ripping forehand after forehand—but all miss as Mark leads 9-3, 11-6 in winning, 5, 9, 8, 6.

Under 22 Women, it was Jackie Lee over Judy Hugh in the final, 11, 11, 7, 9. Jackie was down 0-2 in the semifinals to Whitney Ping before pulling it out, 9, 3, 9, 5, 9. In the other semifinal, it was Judy over Alicia Wei. Alicia (1811) had found the right way in the battle of the Wei’s in the quarters, upsetting Barbara Wei (2074, but 2172 in new ratings), 10,-6,-3,8,7.

Cadet Singles & Team Trials

The top four cadets (under age 15) were seeded out in both boys and girls, with the rest playing in preliminaries on Wednesday to reach the Final Twelve on Thursday. These were put in two groups of six, with the top two in each group making the team, with crossovers on Friday for positions 1-4.

In the Cadet preliminaries, played out to the Final Twelve for boys and girls, the only serious upset was Derrick Poon, rated 1876 (but 1943 in new ratings) over Charlie Sun, rated 1999 (but 2132 in new ratings).

Cadet Boys’ Singles & Team Trials

In Group A, #1 seed Justen Yao (MO) went 5-0, including a 8, 9, 5 win over #2 seed Marcus Jackson (MD). Marcus had an early struggle with Siddarth Viswanathan (NJ) in winning 8, 12, 5, 8, 4. Marcus came in second at 4-1. Siddarth and Derrick Poon (CA) both finished 2-3, with Siddarth coming in third due to his head-to-head win over Derrick, who came in fourth. Alex Wang (TX) and Jonathan Chen (CA) both finished 1-4, with Alex coming in fifth with his head-to-head win over Jonathan, who came in sixth.

In Group B, #1 seed Peter Li (MD) struggled from the start, with five-game wins over Tomas Fuentes-Afflick (CA), (5, 8, 7, 10, 1) and Alexander Yao (MO), (8, 9, 10, 5). He persevered, faced #2 seed AJ Brewer (IN) in the match for first in a battle of 2300 players. AJ had been stream-rolling his competition in losing only one game in four matches. AJ had defeated Peter earlier in men’s singles, but this time it was dead even to the end, with Peter prevailing at 7, 6, 3, 4, 9. (Up 10-8 match point in the fifth, Peter missed an easy pop-up—but kept his composure and...
played a great last all-out looping point.) A longtime player watching the match said he'd never seen anything at that age like the counterlooping these two were doing.

So advancing and making the team were Justen Yao, Marcus Jackson, Peter Li and AJ Brewer. The crossovers were played for final positioning:
1. Justen Yao (MO) 3. AJ Brewer (IN)
2. Marcus Jackson (MD) 4. Peter Li (MD)

Cadet Girls Singles & Team Trials

Going in, the trials looked wide open. Ariel Hsing, rated 2029, seemed assured a spot, but the next eight players ranged in rating from 1709 to 1824, and the next was also competitive at 1639.

In Group A, as expected, Ariel Hsing (CA, with the words, “Let Go. Have Fun!” written on her arm) went 5-0, losing only one game along the way, to Lily Zhang (CA). Lily, seeded #4 in the group at 1756 finished 4-1 to come in second and make the cadet team. She had one close scare, a 8-9, 8-7, 7-7 win over Sylvan Guo (CA), Sylvan, Willa Gu (CA) and Allison Wu (MA) were also able to finish 2-3; in the tie-breaker by games, Willa came third, Alison fourth and Sylvan fifth, with Ellen Huang (CA, 0-5) sixth.

In Group B, it was Alicia Wei (CA) going 5-0 without any five-gamers to make the team. Coming in second was Janice Lan (MD) at 4-1, with a pair of barn-busting five-gamers: 4-8, 8-4, 8-4 over Isabella Chen (NY), and 6-11, 11-7, 10-0 over #1 seed Christiana Divita (CA), who came in third, Alison fourth and Sylvan fifth, with Ellen Huang (CA, 0-5) sixth.

So advancing and making the team were Ariel Hsing, Lily Zhang, Alicia Wei and Janice Lan. The crossovers were played for final positioning:
1. Ariel Hsing (CA) 3. Alicia Wei (CA)
2. Lily Zhang (CA) 4. Janice Lan (MD)

Junior Girls’ Singles & Team Trials

The Final Twelve girls were in two groups of six. In both groups, there was a three-way tie for first, with six of them finishing with records of 4-1. It seemed unfair to the two who would lose only one match, and yet not make the team, but that’s the way it is.

In Group A, Judy Hugh (rated 2330), fresh off losing to Tawny Bahn in the quarterfinals of women’s singles (after leading 3-0 in games), lost to a red-hot Stephanie Shih (2000), who lost to Ariel Hsing (2029), who lost to Judy Hugh. In the tie-breaker, Judy was 5-4, Stephanie 5-5, and Ariel (who was already the #1 finisher on the Cadet team) 4-5, so Ariel did not advance.

In Group B, Judy Hugh was up 1-0 and 20-19 match point against Brooke Sowers, who lost to her. After winning the P” at 14, Ming was up 18-14 in the 2nd, when he lost 7 points in a row. Then he was down 4-0 in the 3rd, when he decided to bell it—“he’d serve and kill. So what if he lost 5 (or 12) in a row? But that ball went in. Final score (would you believe it’s possible?): 21-6, Chui. He’d outscored Hecter 21-2! Meanwhile, Berger, advancing, was quite conventionally 19, 10, -13, 18 pressed by Barry Dattel.

The semi’s between Diane and Don produced the Hardbat Comeback Match of the Tournament. Diane, unhesitatingly executing whatever shot was called for, was up 18-15 in the 5th, then 18-14 when they played a long, super point in which Don repeatedly scrambled after the ball, thrilling the crowd with an off-balance lob. Diane advanced to the final over Scott Branch, who took her 13-11, 11-9, 11-6, 11-9, 11-9.

In the other semi’s, the white-bearded Brazzell, mixing his play well with dead short balls and longs, eliminated Mack 17 in the 3rd, while, in the other, Berger, though unable to prepare well for this tournament, 13, 23 advanced over Budapest. “People are gonna think we’re still playing ping-pong in the garage unless we get some money in the Game,” said Hector on returning to the tournament scene after a long absence. Only 1 of the 5 Hardbat events offered cash. And it wasn’t the 40’s—thought this event provided an exciting finals. Berger was up 1-0 and 20-19 match point against Mack, but he did never get a high ball close to the net, then had another ad, but couldn’t close.

Steve didn’t get any more chances, because now, as one observer put it, “It was a work of art to watch Don feel Steve out to best advantage in the 3rd.”

Actually, Brazzell had been playing with inverted and had only started practicing hardbat two weeks earlier. He plays at the late Bernie Hock’s old, old club in New Anon, IN (can there be any older continuous club-site in the country?). And, says Don, Hock’s longtime doubles partner, Gene Bricker, 93, still turns up there, even goes out for a beer and conversation with the guys.

Doubles

In the Doubles, the 2004/2005 winners, Mack and Kelly, advanced to the final over Scott Kressner/Steve Chiu (once Tajik Junior of the Month”). There they met Berger/Chui who’d ousted Brazzell/John Allen. Someone said, “Mack hits chops brilliantly; if he’s in position when one comes to him, the point’s over.” Is Ray at the ready? With the score 20-19 match point in the 3rd, Steve chops—the ball hits the net, dribbles over, lands, then spins back over the net. Bad as a net edge—which was the way another saw that finishing point. Berger/Chui win 21-19.

Open Singles

In the top half of the unrestricted Hardbat Singles draw, Brazzell, who runs a business called Pro Laminations, used what one fellow called his “potpourri” game—blocking, picking, countering—to 2-zip smother David Rosenzweig’s chances. Meanwhile, Tim Kelly, behind 1-0 and 18-16 in the 2nd against the China-trained, 2287-rated penholder Diane Chen, went on to miss a forehand that would have deuced it. The bottom half of the draws were not playing not 2 out of 3 in the quarter’s, but 3 out of 5. Blame not the unknowing umpires for the discrepancy, but the draws sheets that, confusingly, weren’t prepared for Hardbat play? Loc Ngo had no trouble with unpredictable Chui who’d played, even for Ming, a weird 2/3 match in the 8’s with Bennett. After winning the 1st at 14, Ming was up 18-14 in the 2nd when he lost 7 points in a row. Then he was down 4-0 in the 3rd, when he decided to bell it—he’d serve and kill. So what if he lost 5 (or 12) in a row? But that ball went in. Final score (would you believe it’s possible?): 21-6, Chui. He’d outscored Hector 21-2! Meanwhile, Berger, advancing, was quite conventionally 19, 10, -13, 18 pressed by Barry Dattel.

The semi’s between Diane and Don produced the Hardbat Comeback Match of the Tournament. Diane, unhesitatingly executing whatever shot was called for, was up 18-15 in the 5th, then 18-14 when they played a long, super point in which Don repeatedly scrambled after the ball, thrilling the crowd with an off-balance lob, and won the point, drawing a smile from Diane as she looked to her supporters. That was fun, huh? But the ending for her wasn’t. Because when Don saved that 18-14 point, you could see his whole body go taut and his fists clenched in a call to exhort himself to the utmost. He made it to 18-17...and then to 19-all, whereupon he gave Diane a tricky sidespin serve she failed to return, then finished as the winner by taking his 7th of the last 8 points they’d played.

In another semi’s, Berger again found himself in a game-contested match, but this time he lost to Ngo whom he’d beaten in a 11-9-in-the-5th quarter’s last year. Loc said he had confidence this time—was relaxed, stayed calm. He was proud he’d played patiently. Steve’s hits were relatively mild, could be countered. “If I’d played a fast game, he would have beat me.”

So who won the final? It was scheduled for the following morning, but Brazzell had plane reservations to fly out that night, and, after offering to play the final before going to the airport, an offer rejected by a tired Ngo, left. I hope the organizers gave him his $75 runner-up prize. For the way he entertained the spectators he deserved it...and more.
Seniors

By Tim Boggan

Over 30

In the top half of the Over 30 draw, 2004 30's Champion and #1 seed Shao Yu reached the final with a 4-game semis' win over 2003 U-2200 winner (now rated 2299) Sakka Timsuwan who'd eliminated N.J.'s similarly rated Patrick Mualem. In the quarter's, Shao had stopped (though 14, 9, 9 not easily) current Jamaican Champion and former Association President Joe Dibbs, after Joe had been -9, 7, 10, 10 pressed by 350-point underdog Don Hayes.

In the bottom half, Danny Seemiller on his way to the final didn't drop a game, and only allowed two in double figures—one to CA's Robert Shahnazari and one to U.S. World Team member Darko Rop. Darko's no longer into traveling, but, when he can, he combines his Houston neuromuscular therapy work with focusing in on an occasional tournament. Players attracting attention in this section were Alex Veronin who 10, -9, 6, -9, -10 almost did in 375-point favorite Scott Dalton, and 1834-rated Steve Anderson who, after upsetting Derrick Cone, forced 2298-rated Tri Dinh into the 5th.

Six years ago, Avish Schmid beat Barry Dattel for the Over 40 title. When they met this time, in the 3rd, Barry, before losing to Darko, beat Avi 9, 8, 12, sending him, it may be, off to Nebraska but to Omaha—which, at the Vegas poker tables, he prefers to Texas Hold 'Em.

The final, aside from the 11-9 first game where Shao said he'd have some trouble with Seemiller's serves, went—the way balls kept coming at Danny—quickly.

Men Over 40

No point in following straight-game winners Cheng "Chen" Yinghua and Seemiller to the final—but I hasten to add Hank McColllum, alone, did make a spirited -9, -10, -14 fight of it with Danny. Best early round matches in Chen's half were Santos Shih's 4, 10, -8, 9 win over Larry Thomas; and Don Hayes' 5-game upset (from down 2-0 and 1-5 in the 3rd) over Rudy Miranda, and then, though a losing one, Don's gritty 13-11-in-the-4th match-up with De Tran. Dr. De, last year's 30's winner, followed with another win—an 11-9-in-the-5th cardiac stopper to self and opponent, Dr. Tuan Le, the 2005 runner-up in the 40's to Chen. De was up 8-4 in the 5th and hoping for an easy way home, only to see Tuan tie it up at 8-all—at which point, both of them said later, they were "scared." At 9-all, Tuan flipped a ball off, and at 10-9 De flipped a ball on. "De's the best Doctor," said Tuan.

The big surprise in Seemiller's half was Richard McAfee—particularly since he'd just been advised he was eligible for paralympic play (Class 8?) because of his bad knees. He walks, limps, with a cane, but don't be deceived—he beat Yang Sung (who'd upset Loc Ngo), Dave Sakai, and Barry Dattel before losing to Danny. Big Mac's switched to a Neubauer racket. "It slows the game down," he says. "I can't move, so I gotta do something to stay competitive." Seemiller points out that since Vegas is 2,000 feet above sea level, the altitude makes the ball come faster, and the dry air of the desert surroundings makes for more friction, more spin—factors players have to adjust to. Playing against McAfee's long pips you have to be careful, says Danny, "If you loop and Richard chops or blocks, the return is loaded. If you try to loop again, the ball will go straight down, so you have to push that return ball upwards."

Another player being noticed was 1918-rated Steve Hochman who's coached by Boris Shafir. A smart player who has a strong backhand and returns serves well,Steve upset Mas Hashimoto, rated 200 points higher; then he -9, 8, 8, -9, 8 knocked out 2225-rated Mike Leshinsky before going down to Danny. Meanwhile, George Brathwaite, behind 2-1 to Viktor Sidorov, decided, just in 11-9-in-the-5th time, he'd better stop his opening spin balls to Sidorov's backhand and go to the forehand, because Viktor was successfully pushing down hard on the ball and causing George follow-up problems. The Chief also had to go 5 in his 8th's match against Minnesota's Dan Wig—but this one he didn't win. Dan, a lefty double-wing looper who spins the ball then rips it, hadn't played for 10 years before coming back to his 2319 rating.

The final?...What 2, 0, 0 final! Danny's back was bothering him, but he had to show up, start a match with Chen, for otherwise he wouldn't get his runner-up $175 prize.

Men Over 40 Under 1600

Early-round 5-game matches in this 51-entry modified 40's event were: Al Kong (finals Night Raffle winner of my six History volumes, courtesy of the Houston TTC), -5, -6, 8, 11, 9, over Glenn Caplin; top seed Harold Olson, 8, -8, 7, -10, 10, over Frank Zandpour; Alex Sumeri, 9, -10, -7, 10, 9, over Leszek Kasowski; and Anh Ngo, 14, -13, -9, 11, 6, over Dennis Liu. Of these only Olson reached the semi's where he matched with Minnesota's Dan Wig—but this one he didn't win. Dan, a loopy double-wing looper who spins the ball then rips it, hadn't played for 10 years before coming back to his 2319 rating.

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Women Over 40

The 10-player Women's over 40's, was divided into 3 round robin—with the 3 winners advancing. Results not in doubt were Diane Dongye Chen, a 500-point favorite over Barbara Kaminsky, her playing arm sore from too much swing practice (at golf, not table tennis); and Simone Yang, a 400-point favorite over Donna Sakai. In the only contested bracket, Gina Doyle (rated 2048), last year's 40's runner-up to Lilly Yip, defeated Charlene Xiaoying Liu (rated 2133). Gina, a short-pips penholder, was able to upset Charlene with some luck and by scoring again and again with backhand smashes, for which Charlene was just unprepared since her practice partner, her husband Changping, didn't have such a weapon to flash/slash. Gina went on to put up some -9, -9, -5 semi's resistance to Simone. In 2004, former U.S. Team member Yang easily won the 40's from former Chinese Team member Chen, but this time just the reverse was true.
**Men Over 50**

The Men’s 50’s was Seemiller’s event—he didn’t drop a game. In his quarter’s draw, there were two 200-point upsets: Fred Garrett beat James Rautis in 5, and Simon Gendler, 6, 4, 8, 9, 7, to knock 2-0 down to eliminate John Monaco. Gendler then continued his advance by 8, 14, 11, 6, ousting Dave Rubin. You find the computer scoring method—the winning scores often preceded by minus signs, but sometimes not—inconsistent, confusing? Me too. But I’ll continue to translate them out for you, hoping I won’t make a mistake.

While Seemiller was having its 6, 9, 13 most challenging match with 2003 Over 50’s winner Lim Ming Chui, Lon Dean, before going down docilely in the semi’s to Danny, was dominating his quarter’s. First, with his Neubauer half-block/half-chop play he beat Braithwaite in 5—George too late seeing that nothing ball serves worked better than spin serves, and noting that “the longer the rally, the more severe Dean got.” Then Lon downed Mark Wedret in 4, after Mark’s long pips had played havoc with Von Schimmelmann’s game (“There wasn’t any friction on his ball—I just touched it and it went four feet off the table”).

In Coach Hui Yuan Liu’s half, Don Geeze gave Dan Green a 5-game upset scare, whereupon Dan in turn, though losing, at least hit Dick Hicks with an 11-, 5-, 11, 8, something to think about. Dick then went on to win more dangerous. Against Due Loi, he was down 2-1 and 9-4 and double match point, but pulled it out. Then, oh, oh, Hank McCoulum—his 50 Doubles partner—stopped him (knew all Dick’s tricks, did he?)

Defending 50’s Champion Jiri Hlava, who for 25 years has worked as a counselor in a hospital mental health ward, enjoys encouraging lower rated players to be more passionate about the game (“They get fired up, I get fired up,” he says). But there’ll be no 50’s win this year for Jiri—Bill Ryan’s very good table game, his long pips and short blocks denied him, 12-10 in the 4th. Bill then fell to Sakai, after Dave, winning all the close games (-5, 11, 13, -6, 10) had barely survived Seattle looper Sung Yang, just back from the Korean Open. In getting to the final against Seemiller, Coach Liu (2398) had some work to do—he went 9 in the 4th against Sakai, 9 in the 4th against McCoulum. “Liu’s serves were too good,” said Hank (2096), “otherwise I could control play.”

**Over 50 Doubles**

Seemiller/Sakai, giving up on the average only 5 points a game, obliterated the opposition. But runner-ups Hicks and McCoulum were tested in triplets. With their match tied 1-1 against Sinisa Borko Dragodicov and Odo Wang who’s trying to build up table tennis locally (see his classy, multi-colored Vegas Over 50 Over 60 Doubles The Best Table Game in Vegas...Open daily: 9am to 10 pm), they got the 12-10 momentum push in the 3rd they needed. Which brought them to John Harrington/Bill Kenig, whom they beat in 5—just as Harrington/Kenig had done earlier to last year’s runner-ups, Rautis and Meredith Elston. Finally, Dave and Danny took out the Defending Champs Hlava/Chui, also in 5.

**Women Over 50**

There were four round robins in the Women’s 50’s. In Group 1, Charlene Liu, the #1 seed, had no trouble advancing. Ditto for Group 2’s Bella Livotin. In that bracket an energetic Tyra Perkins had a 5-game, 250-point upset win over Emma 200’s over Joe Ciprianino. Odo Wang over Richard Shroust, 8, 9, -10, 9, and Martin Sundel, last year’s Over 40 Under 1600 winner, over Harold Elson. None of these players would reach the quarter’s, but Sundel (having picked up 400+ points in the last year) came very close, losing to Leung Che-Him, 12-10 in the 5th. Leung now lives in CA, but he used to seek out Braithwaite for matches at Robert Chen’s NYC Club. No doubt knowing The Chief’s game helped “Mr. Leung,” as George calls him, to close the 150-point rating gap between them. George needed all his accumulated knowledge of Leung’s game to beat him (“I had to open to his middle, force him to block, for otherwise he’s very good at angling the ball”). Up 2-1 and 16-15 in the 4th, George called “Time”—and then scored with a surprise backhand to Leung’s forehand that allowed him to move to an easier 400 semi’s match with last year’s runner-up, Sweevers. Dell, in the meantime, had prevailed over 72-year-old Nicki Mintiveris, the 60’s winner back way back in ’94. “I was surprised that a man of 61 could show such agility,” said Nickie. Dell too?

On the other side of the draw, Hicks, who for the last 9 years has been in the 60 finals, finally saw his streak broken by penholder Tay Chong Keng who tells me that after long ago seeing a friend use the “reverse backhand,” he began adopting it for fun, and actually used it in the 1987 U.S. Closed held at the Vegas Showboat. Later of course World Champion Liu Guoliang popularized it. After losing the 1st game at 10, Dick had 10-9 led in the 2nd and got a backhand loop in, but Tay returned it and went on to take the offense with his over-the-table shovel-shot pushes and placements that eventually allowed him to pick a backhand in for a 2nd 12-10 winner. In the 3rd, helped by a couple of lucky breaks, Tay led 10-9 after Dick had gotten in a risky backhand loop. Then Tay saw an opening and smacked in his forehand; Hicks countered with his backhand, but the ball hit the top of the net and went off. “I didn’t have the legs,” Dick said. Perhaps Tay was tired too, for he couldn’t take a game from Braithwaite who could see “Nittaku” on the ball and so felt comfortable soft spinning...spinning...spinning for his 8th over 60’s win since 1995.

**Over 60 Doubles**

Three exceptional 5-game matches in the 60 Doubles. In the quarter’s, Tay/H. Hot Cung, 6, -9, 10, -8, 9 outlasted Ralph Stadelman/Odo Wang. Ralph, who in real life has much enjoyed teaching and tutoring 7th/8th-grade sections of Gifted and Talented children, said that the pair serving controlled the point, and that his opponents’ angle flicks didn’t give him a chance to use his forehand as he’d like. In the semi’s, Tay and Cung were going down in 4 to Braithwaite and Dan Green who’s been getting lessons and workout drills every week with Coach Li Xiyuan. In the other, Hicks and Ron Von Schimmelmann looked like they’d be taken in by Ragmar “Ray” Hahlstrom and Bill Ryan’s Neubauer racket and deceptive stroke movements. But down 10-7 triple match point, they just kept the ball in play...
and while Ron safely pushed back no-spin balls, Ray thought it best not to be aggressive. Result: Hicks/Von Schimmelman steadied out a 14-12 win.

In the final, Dick and Ron again looked beaten, were down 2-1 and 10-8 in the 4th when Hicks, looping two point-winning backhands in, caught Green by surprise, after which he and Ron went on to win that game and the 5th.

Women over 60

In Women's 60's semi's play, Andrzejewska defeated Defending Champion Kronlage who'd come out of her round robin with a win over Irina Hellwig who, if not happy with her game on losing to the "new" Guil Kendall, was very pleased at becoming the first U.S. woman umpire to be awarded a Blue Badge. In the other semi's, Sanders' steady backhand play won out over her impatient forehands to put the kibosh on Kaminsky who'd won the 1st Women's 60's in 2002.

The final between Danuta and Suzanna couldn't have been closer, though it didn't start off that way. Suzanna was up 1-0 and 3-1 in the 2nd when she began de-accelerating her forehand picks and lost 7 points in a row to go down 10-8. Then, though she recovered to deuce, she missed two key put away forehands until, finally, Danuta, timing her move just right, socked in a 16-14 winner. The 3rd and 4th games were split—with Suzanna positioned up at the table rolling off-the-bounce backhands and Danuta scrappily on the move. In the 5th, Danuta had triple match point, but made errors. As did Suzanna after deucing it. At 13-all, Sanders got her second end-game net, and another error by Danuta gave Suzanna the title.

Men Over 70

Thirty-two years ago at our Oklahoma City National's we had 2 entrants in the over 70's. This year we had 39. Only one #1 seed in the 10-Group 70's round robin failed to advance: Dean Johnson, at work in his free time compiling photo books of some of the U.S.'s greatest players, defeated Ralph Muramoto, then was eliminated by #2 seed Lynn Smith. Next to fall was #6 seed Wes Wolfe who was beaten 10,9,9 by 1968 and 1972 U.S. Open runner-up to D-J Lee, Jack Howard. "Maybe," said Wes in losing those close games, "I was intimidated by Jack's legacy." Sammy Liang, the #3 seed, was ousted in straight games by #5 seed Dick Peregrine who usually plays Tues./Fri. nights at Milwaukee's University of Wisconsin Club, though now in the winter he's based at Laguna Woods, CA enjoying a little vacation from their usual two doubles Champion Smith. who with his wife Sig-Renee fought fire with fire and devilishly kept Billy from attacking with his backhand.

Championship Doubles

Men's Doubles

In the quarterfinals, there was one seemingly "shocking" result, and one come-from-behind near upset. The apparent shocker, news of which spread like wildfire, was Samson Dubina/Tri Dinh (rated 2421 & 2298, average 2359.5) over the #2 seeded team of David Zhumg/Han Xiao (2673 and 2587, average 2630), by scores of 7,3,4! HOWEVER...it was later discovered the umpire had put the scores in backwards, and Zhumg/Xiao won by those scores. So...no shocker.

However, the #3 seeded team of Barney J. Reed (2589) & Freddie Gabriel (2492) made things interesting. They were down 0-2 to Nison Aronov (2467) and De Tran (2411) before winning, 6-5,10,5,8,8.

Khoa had a scheduling conflict for his quarterfinal match—the match was scheduled for 7:30 PM Thursday night, which was at the same time as Khoa's Hall of Fame induction! Yes, Khoa, now 40 years old (minimum age for the Hall) is now a Hall of Famer, and the match was played the next day. Unfortunately for the Hall of Famer, Khoa and John Tran Thach were upset by Shao Yu/Liu Hui Yuan, 6-5,10,6.

Final:

Ilija Lupulesku/Mark Hazinski vs. David Zhumg/Han Xiao

Once again the top-seeded team seemed the favorites, with Lupulesku/Hazinski the defending champions from 2004 and 2005. David is a seven-time U.S. Men's Doubles Champion, but he and Han Xiao were not experienced together—Han usually played with Adam Hugh, while David usually played with Eric Owens, but Adam and Eric were not here. Han had won Men's Doubles with Cheng Yinghua in 2002 at the age of 15.

Yet David and Han seemed to click together. After the match, David said, "Han is so mature! I worried that he wouldn't handle the pressure, but he handled it very well." Han hadn't played well in close matches in singles, and said, "Doubles is much easier, more systematic, you know exactly what you have to do." As to what David told him to do, he said, "Keep the ball on the table!" Tactically, David, a pips-out penholder, is the perfect control player, able to drop the ball short and keep the ball in play seemingly forever, never giving an easy shot. Han's a two-winged looper, very good at looping winners off the bounce, and with David keeping Lupi/Hazinski off balance, Han was able to do this over and over.

Zhumg/Xiao won the first 11-8, then lost the second 7-11. In the third, they led 10-7, and then it was 10-10. This was the key game—if they blew this, it would be difficult to come back. Lupi/Hazinski went up 11-10, then Zhumg/Xiao led 12-11 and 13-12 before winning, 14-12. In the fourth, it was 4-4, then 7-4 for Zhumg/Xiao as Lupi/Hazinski called a timeout, but to no avail as Zhumg/Xiao won the match and title, 8-7,12,8.
Women’s Doubles

There were only five teams. The lone quarterfinal match, a five-game battle, was Jackie Lee/Nan Li over Diane Chen/Gina Dole, 12,5,6,6. In the semis, top-seeded Wang Chen/Jasna Reed (#1 and #2 in singles) won over Jackie & Nan, 6,6,10, while #2 seeded Tawny Banh/Crystal Huang won over Whitney Ping/Simone Yang, 5,5,3.

Final: Wang Chen/Jasna Reed vs. Tawny Banh/Crystal Huang

On paper, the top-seeded Wang Chen/Jasna Reed were the favorites, with ratings of 2605/2477, to second-seeded Tawny Banh/Crystal Huang at 2424/2384. Wang and Jasna were also very good doubles players with Wang Chen a two-time ITTF Pro Tour Women’s Doubles Champion (including the 2004 U.S. Open ITTF Pro Tour), and Jasna a former Olympic Bronze Medalist for Yugoslavia and a three-time U.S. National Women’s Doubles Champion. However, Tawny and Crystal were experienced together, were a righty/lefty team (Crystal a lefty pips-out penholder with an inverted reverse penhold backhand), plus had a perfect combo with Crystal the control/set-up person while Tawny attacked penholder with an inverted reverse penhold backhand), plus had a perfect experienced together. were a righty/lefty team (Crystal a lefty pips-out penholder with an inverted reverse penhold backhand), plus had a perfect

Mixed Doubles

In the 8ths, Freddie Gabri/Isaac Lee, rated 2492 and 2326, faced the father-daughter team of Lim Ming Chui (2240) and Jane Chui (2135). Jane has been absent from tournaments for quite some time, and was way out of practice, so the match shouldn’t have been close... right? The Chui’s lost the first two, but won the next two close ones before going out in five, 57,10,9,4.

There was one close quarterfinal match, Mark Hazinski/Crystal Huang over Shao Yu/Stephanie Shih, another match that by the ratings (2623 and 2384, vs. 2527 and 2000 even) shouldn’t have been close. So toss out those ratings, but the favorites did win, 9,7,9,8,9.

In the semifinals, Lupulesku/Wang defeated Khoa Nguyen/Whitney Ping at 4,4,7, while Hazinski/Huang came from behind to defeat Barney J. Reed/Tawny Banh at -9,-8,4,7,7.

Final:

Ilija Lupulesku/Wang Chen vs. Mark Hazinski/Crystal Huang

Once again a team looked to be a big favorite on paper, with Lupulesku (2776) teamed with Wang Chen (2605), against Mark Hazinski (2623) and Crystal Huang (2384). Lupulesku has countless doubles titles (including a silver medal at the Olympics and second at the Worlds, both for Men’s Doubles; three-time U.S. Men’s Doubles Champion; and ten-times Men’s and Mixed Doubles Champion for Yugoslavia). Wang was a two-time ITTF Pro Tour Women’s Doubles Champion. They were also a lefty-righty combo, with Lupi the lefty. They were, of course, the huge favorites. They were the top seeds, while Mark Hazinski/Crystal Huang, seeded third, had barely survived after being down 0-2 in the semis.

So of course Mark Hazinski/Crystal Huang won, 7,7,3,8,8!

So... how did they do it? Besides being a lefty/righty combo as well (Crystal the lefty pips-out penholder), they are a seemingly perfect combo, with Crystal setting balls up for Mark to rip with his powerful loops from both wings. As good as Lupi and Wang were on paper, both tend to be more steady than powerful, and so didn’t end the points nearly as effectively as Mark. Hazinski/Huang started well, winning a game 11-7, but they were basically shellacked the next two games, 11-7, 11-3. After being outscored 22-10 against the much higher rated opponents, some wrote them off. But when they jumped to a 5-1 lead in the fourth, it got interesting again. It became even more interesting when Lupulesku/Wang gradually pulled closer and closer, finally tying it at 8-all. The rallies were often spectacular, with Lupi, Wang and Crystal extremely consistent, but the points were often ended by Mark’s rips hitting the mark. At 8-all, that’s what happened as Mark smashes a loop (usually he counterloops), and then loop kills another, and they lead 10-8. Wang misses a loop (a rarity), and the match was over.

Hazinski/Huang seemed to get better and better, with Crystal’s precise control giving Mark shot after unreturning shot as they led 3-0. Up 6-5, Mark missed a forehand flip (6-6) and kicked the ball, and was yellow carded. Four quick points later, and Mark and Crystal led 10-6 quadruple match point.

Lupulesku counterlooped a winner, and Mark missed his own counterloop, and Wang served at 8-10. Right into the net! And so Mark Hazinski/Crystal Wang (who had lost in the final last year to Adam Hugh/Lily Yip) won the title, 7,7-3,8,8.
USA Nationals Results

**Junior & Cadet Singles & Team Trials**
Top Four make National Team except for Junior Boys, whose trials are in February due to conflict with World Junior Championships.

**Junior Boys:** 1st AJ Brewer (IN), 2nd Steven Chan (CA), 3rd Allen Fan (NY), 4th Peter Li (MD)
5th Alex Wang (TX); 6th Jonathan Chen (CA); 7th Amareesh Sahu (MD); 8th Timothy Wang (TX); 9th Anders Trudsson (MN); 10th Charlie Sun (MD); 11th Alexander Yao, Justen Yao.

**Junior Girls:** 1st Judy Hsing (NJ), 2nd Olena Sowers (OH), 3rd Afta Fang (CA); 4th Stephanie Shih (NJ); 5th Corinne Liang (NH); 6th Cassandra Lee (CA); 7th Alicia Wei (CA); 8th Isabella Chen (NY), Jennifer Must (OH), Alison Wu (MA).

**Cadet Boys:** 1st Justen Yao (MO), 2nd Marcus Jagoe (MD), 3rd AJ Brewer (IN), 4th Peter Li (MD), 5th Siddharth Vyaswanthan (NJ), 6th Derrick Poon (CA), 7th Kevin Tai (CA), 8th Jonathan Chen (CA), 10th Ilya Moussounov (NC); 11th Alex Wang (TX); 12th Tomas Fuentes-Affleck (CA).

**Cadet Girls:** 1st Ariel Hsing (CA); 2nd Lily Zhang (CA); 3rd Alicia Wei (CA); 4th Jameen Lee (MD); 5th Isabel Chen (NY); 6th Allison Wu (MA); 7th Christiana Divita (CA); 8th Tammy Gu (CA); 9th Alex Wang (TX); 10th Cindy Hing (TX); 11th Ellen Hwang (CA); 12th Sylvia Guo (CA).

**Hardbat Events**
All Hardbat matches are games to 21.

**Hardbat Singles - Final:** Loc Bao Ngo d. Donald Bruzel, def.; SF: Ngo d. Steve Berger, 19-13,12,12; SF: Hoang d. Chiu, 16,16,12,14,19; QF: Bruzel d. David Rosenberg, def.; SF: Kelly d. Bobby Hsing, 18,19; QF: Chiu d. Darrell Jui, 10,7,8,11; QF: Hoang d. Alex Liu, 9,5,11; QF: Chiu d. Tim Kainada, 15,11,16.

**Hardbat Doubles - Final:** Steve Berger/Lim Ming d. Timothy Wang/Lin Ming Chui, 13,13,13; SF: Berger d. Barry Dattel, 15,11,11,11; SF: Lim Ming Chui d. Lim Ming Chui, 9,11,11.

Over 70 Men's Singles - Final: Dick Peregrine d. Bill Neddy, 13-4,8-7; SF: Peregrine d. Lynwood Smith, 6-7,4-6; SF: Fred Hachhet d. B. Fahlstrom, 7-6,3-11; QF: Fahlstrom d. Mark Shapiro, 6,14; QF: Neddy d. Jack Howard, 8-7,8-7; Peregrine d. Daniel Liang, 3-10,2-10,3; Smith d. Dean Johnson, 5,5.

**Over 40 Women's Singles - Final:** Diane Chen d. Simone Yang, 8,3,4; SF: Ying d. Gina Dola, 9,5; Chen - byes.

**Over 50 Women's Singles - Final:** Charlene Liu d. Bella Livshin, 9,3,3; SF: Liu d. Barbara Kaminsky, 6,8,3; Livshin d. Donna Sakai, 4,5,6.

**Over 60 Women's Singles - Final:** Suzanna Sanders d. Danuta Andrzejska, 8-14,14-6,13; SF: Sanders d. Barbara Kaminsky, 2-11,11,6; Andrzejska d. Yvonne Kronlage, 3,4,6.

**Over 70 Women's Singles - Final:** Iyona Kronlage, 3-0,2-10,1-2; Brat in 2-1; 3 Jane Magnus, 1-2,4; Francis Moore, 0,3.

**Over 75 Singles - Final:** Lynwood Smith d. Ivan Slade, 4-6,6,7; SF: Smith d. Dick Peregrine, 7-9,9; Slade d. Byng Forsberg, 16,8,8; QF: Smith d. Al Miller, 9,10,6,9; Peregrine d. Danny Kim, 5,7,3; Slade d. Bob Sanders, 7,8,2; Forsberg d. Rudy Hartmann, 1,7,3,5,9,5.

**Over 80 Singles - Final:** Ivan Slade d. Byng Forsberg, 5,10,8; SF: Slade d. Karol Skrbek, 7,5,8; Forsberg d. Danny Kim, 9,7,9.

**Over 60 Men's Singles - Final:** Cheng Yinghua d. Dave Sakai, 3-0,2-14,9,7; Sakai d. Perng Yuhua, 3-0; Sakai d. Dan Seemiller, ret. at 0-2 in first game (neck)

**Over 50 Men's Singles - Final:** Dan Seemiller d. McAfee d. Barry Dattel, -6,4.9,9; Seemiller d. Dan Schmidt, 6.3,7. Tran d. Tuan Dai Le, 6,-8,8,-7,9; Le d. Dan Seemiller, ret. at 0-2 in first game (neck)

**Over 40 Men's Singles - Final:** Cheng Yinghua d. Ivan Slade, 9,6,8,9; SF: Seemiller d. Richard Hanks, 6,4; Hanks d. Tuan Dai Le, ret. at 0-2 in first game (neck)

**Over 30 Singles - Final:** Shao Yu d. Dan Seemiller, 3-0; 2nd Harriet Forsberg, 12,11; SF: Smith d. Byng Forsberg, 11,11,-7,9; SF: Smith d. Karol Skrbek, 1,6,8,9,13,13; Lupulesku d. Lim Ming Chui, 1,7,11,17.

**Senior Events**

**Over 30 Singles - Final:** Shao Yu d. Dan Seemiller, 9,3,2; SF: Shao d. Sakda Timmsawun, 8,-8,8,7; Seemiller d. Darko Rop, 4,10,6; SF: Shao d. Joseph Dibbs, 14,9,9; Timmsawun d. Patrick McAleen, 8,5,7; Rop d. Barry Dattel, 12,9,4; Seemiller d. Tuan Le, 9,6,8.

**Over 40 Men's Singles - Final:** Cheng Yinghua d. Dan Seemiller, ret. at 0-2 in first game (neck injury); SF: Cheng d. De Tran, 7,6,5; Seemiller d. Richard McAfee, 5,4,1; SF: Cheng d. Ari游y Schneider, 9,7,5,9,6,7; Tran d. Tuan Dui Dae, 1,6,8,-7,9,7; McAfee d. Barry Dattel, 6,4,9; Seemiller d. Dan Wiang, 6,5,6.

**Over 50 Men's Singles - Final:** Dan Seemiller d. Liu Hui Yuan, 5,5,4; SF: Seemiller d. Lon Dean, 3,2,6; Liu d. Hank McCoullon, 3-10,8,9; QF: Seemiller d. Lim Ming Chui, 6,9,13; Dean d. Mark Wedert, 6-6,5,8; McCoullon d. Richard Hanks, 7,7,5,5; Seemiller d. Lim Ming Chui, 6,5,6.

**Over 60 Men's Singles - Final:** George Brathwaite d. Chong Keng Tay, 8,2,9; SF: Brathwaite d. Dell Sweerts, 7,5,6,5; Tay d. Richard Hanks, 10,10,9,9; QF: Hicks d. Joe Lee, 9,8,9; Tay d. Daniel Green, 10,8,7; Sweerts d. Nick Mintsiveris, 7-11,6,5; Brathwaite d. Leung Cheching, 7,9,8,15.

**Boys' Primary School Singles (13&U - U) - Final:** AJ Brewer d. Alexander Yao, 4,1,5; SF: Brewer d. Wesley Fan, 5,4,2; Yang d. Thomas Fuentes-Affleck, 6,7,7,-17,6; Brewer d. Wesley Fan, 5,6,9,9; QF: Fuentes-Affleck d. Justin Nguyen, 6,6,7,9; Yao d. Brian Figg, 4,4,6,9; Fan d. Charlie Sun, 7,7,7,9,9,9; Brewer d. Kevin Yang, 3,4,4.

**Girls' Primary School Singles (13&U - U) - Final:** Byng Hsing d. Willa Tammy Gu, 5,12,6; SF: Hsing d. Anne Deng, 5,6,6; Gu d. Natalie Sun, 6,5,6,9; QF: Hsing d. Charleen Shihe, 3,1,9; Deng d. June Gao, 5,5,6; Gu d. Jasmine Nguyen, 9,-5,6,8; Sun d. Christina Ding, 9,9,9.

**Boys' Elementary School Singles (10&U - U) - Final:** Vujin Feng d. Ethan Chua, 5,6,6,9; SF: Feng d. Andrew Chen, 4,3,4; Chua d. Christopher Brewer, -9,-11,13,10,6; SF: Feng d. Luke Yamasaki, 5,4,8; Chua d. Eric Shennsapi, 9,9,-8,8,5,6; Chua d. Nolan Chen, 12,-7,2,6,5; Brewer d. Charles Deng, 9,5,8,11.

USA TABLE TENNIS MAGAZINE  March/April 2007
Junior Boys’ Singles

Boys’ Trials will be held Feb. 27, 2007. They were not held here due to conflict with the World Junior Championships. While it was not for the USA Team, the top four in the Boys’ Singles event also played off for Singles: 1. Aj Brewer (IN) 3. Alden Fan (NJ) 2. Steven Chan (CA) 4. Peter Li (MD)

Elementary & Primary School Singles

Without a doubt, the most watched match in the tournament, other than the feature matches at the end in the arena (Men’s Singles final and semifinal. Women’s Singles final) was a semifinal and final of Boys’ Elementary Singles (10&Under). In one semifinals, a new player from China, Feng Yijun (in the U.S. for a year, with a green card) easily won against Andrew Chen, 4,3,4. It was the other semifinal became the show-stopping match of the tournament.

Battling it out were CJ Brewer (age 9, rated 1332 in the tournament ratings, but 1520 in current ratings, from Indiana, younger brother of Junior Boys’ Champion AJ Brewer) and Ethan Chua (age 8, rated 1384, son of regular USATT Magazine photographer Gerry Chua, soon to be teary-eyed from his son’s performance). “They are both so cute, can’t they both win?” asked Jasna Reed. No, they could not, and so the two had a monumental battle. CJ plays all-around, but spent much of the match blocking as Ethan relentlessly looped, even though his head seemed barely over the table. CJ won the first two, and was up 10-5 match point in the third – but Ethan’s relentless, almost impossible looping (shouldn’t there be a rule you must be at least “this tall” to loop like that?) won that game (I came over to watch just after so didn’t see that comeback), and game four. In the fifth, CJ went up 6-1. And then, the impossible (again). Ethan simply looped every ball he could touch. Chris blocked most of them, but Ethan would loop one, two, three whatever it was a semifinal and final of Boys’ Elementary Singles (10&Under). In one semifinals, a new player from China, Feng Yijun (in the U.S. for a year, with a green card) easily won against Andrew Chen, 4,3,4. It was the other semifinal became the show-stopping match of the tournament.

During Competition

Nutrition:
Be aware of your hydration and nutrition needs. If possible bring light snack foods and drinks with you. It is common that athletes forget to adequately drink and eat during competition.
Try to plan your eating schedule based on your competition schedule and keep track of what food and drink you have consumed.

Scout Opponents:
Try to get a look at your upcoming opponents. If this is not possible, then try to find someone who has played them and ask some basic questions.
• What is their basic style of play?
• What are their favorite serves and serve returns?
• What are their tendencies at critical times of the match?
• What are their strongest shots?

Rest When Possible:
If you have enough time between matches, try to rest. Find a quiet corner or even go outside of the hall for a while. Remember, you should never leave the venue without first getting the permission of the Referee.

Change Clothes:
Bring a couple of changes of clothes with you if you are going to be in the playing hall for a long period of time. Putting on fresh clothes will help you feel physically and psychologically refreshed.

Keep Records:
After each match, fill out your Match Evaluation form or make some notes. You will find this information invaluable at the end of the event.

As you can see, there is a lot to consider when competing in a tournament. It is not enough to just train beforehand to assure success. You must also develop good tournament management skills as well. Follow the steps above and you will improve both your tournament results and your playing level.
Basics Corner: Forehand Pendulum Serve

The forehand pendulum serve is one of the most widely used serves as the starting position in the backhand corner allows the server to cover most of the table with the forehand for the third ball.

Forehand Sidespin – Left

Preparation: The ball toss is shoulder height. The racket is held by the thumb and forefinger with the handle free to give maximum wrist movement.

Toss – Contact: The racket moves forward brushing the ball on the left side. In this case the racket is also angled backwards to give backspin. By angling the racket forward, topspin will be produced.

Follow Through: After contact, the racket moves in the opposite direction to make it more difficult for the opponent to see where contact occurred.

Forehand Sidespin – Right

Preparation: The starting position is with the free hand with the ball and racket both close to the table end-line. The feet are positioned with the right leg well back and the body in a crouched position.

Toss: The elbow is brought back to shoulder height with the wrist bent back towards the elbow. The racket is held by the thumb and forefinger with the handle free to give maximum wrist movement.

Contact: The wrist is accelerated forward to brush the ball on the right side. The racket is angled backwards, which gives backspin-sidespin. By angling the racket forward, topspin-sidespin will result.

Follow Through: After contact, the racket moves in the opposite direction to make it more difficult for the opponent to see where contact occurred.

Explore Over 350 Tips of the Week at www.usatt.org – every Monday since Dec., 1999!

TIP OF THE MONTH: MARCH
Universal Improvement Secrets
By Carl Danner

Most club players, and quite a few tournament players, are afflicted by a lack of mobility and consistency. By contrast, few matches at most playing levels are really lost because of a lack of power. Likewise, most of these players never (as in not ever) perform any practice drills to improve their footwork or steadiness.

Here’s a drill to work on both. Play a topspin point at three-quarters pace where you use the whole table and hit shots in any direction. See if you and your partner can keep the rally going for twenty-five or fifty shots. Emphasize moving fully for every stroke, and slow the pace down (if necessary) until you can do so. As you get better at this, increase the speed gradually, but never at the expense of consistency.

Practice doesn’t always make perfect, but no practice makes nothing.

TIP OF THE MONTH: APRIL
Training for Quickness
By Carl Danner

Quickness is an asset for high-level play. But can it be trained?

In its raw form, one’s reaction time (e.g., push a button when the light blinks) may be innate and difficult to change. But applied quickness — a quick reply to a shot — involves other factors that can be improved.

Applied quickness starts with clean stroke and footwork technique that gets you to the ball efficiently, with a minimum of flourishes or extra movements. That technique is then built into muscle memory through the second factor of careful repetition. Many top players add a third component of practiced anticipation, gauging a return’s likely direction by their opponent’s position, habits, and the kind of ball he or she is trying to play. When all these factors come together, the result can look like magic.

To train for applied quickness, start by working out any extra kinks in your strokes or footwork. Commit to a neutral grip, and don’t vary it. Stroke to deliver the racket squarely to the ball so no adjustments are needed for good contact. When practicing, be a fanatic for form and don’t sacrifice proper strokes for speed or power. Lastly, watch opponents with an eye for prediction, looking for physical clues (like the positioning of shoulders and feet) that may tell you what’s coming next.

Clean technique, muscle memory, and practiced anticipation. These factors can translate anyone’s raw reaction time into applied quickness that will confound many opponents.
If you believe you should be on the Olympic Eligible list, contact Dom Gheorghe at USA TT, 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 2749 Lupulesku, Ilija
2. NJ 2692 Zhang, David
3. MD 2673 Cheng, Yinghua
4. IN 2662 Hazinski, Mark
5. TX 2571 Owens, Eric
6. MD 2563 Xiao, Han
7. CA 2559 Nguyen, Khoa Dinh
8. TX 2542 Subojic, Victor
9. TX 2526 Wang, Jiachen David
10. NY 2502 Perez, Alexis
11. NJ 2511 Hugh, Adam
12. CA 2496 Banh, Tawny Ai
13. MD 2477 Li, Nan
14. OR 2410 O'Neill, Sean Patrick
15. NY 2479 Dubina, Samson David
16. NY 2468 Aronov, Nison
17. CA 2470 Kazantsev, Misha
18. FL 2484 Alban, Keith
19. NY 2479 Dubina, Samson David
20. NY 2499 Rop, Darko
21. CA 2470 Gabriel, Freddie
22. NY 2492 Tran, De C.
23. TX 2488 Reed, Jasna
24. NY 2427 Wetzler, John Mark
25. MA 2407 Chui, Chi-Sun

### TOP OLYMPIC ELIGIBLE WOMEN
1. MD 2672 Gao, Jun
2. NY 2562 Ma, Karen
3. CA 2496 Banh, Tawny Ai
4. TX 2488 Reed, Jasna
5. CA 2477 Li, Nan
6. CA 2455 Huang, Yao Xi
7. CA 2456 Huang, Yao Xi
8. CA 2499 Rop, Darko
9. CA 2384 Lee, Jacqueline
10. NJ 2311 Hugh, Judy
11. NJ 2301 Yip, Lily
12. CO 2291 Ping, Whitney
13. MD 2214 Wei, Barbara
14. OR 2209 Yang, Simone Xiaomin
15. CA 2186 Hsing, Ariel
16. NY 2179 Panich, Svetlana
17. MD 2158 Wu, Katherine
18. OK 2155 Wang, Heather Hua
19. CA 2147 Fong, Ata
20. OH 2129 Sowers, Olena S.
21. NJ 2128 Shi, Stephanie C.
22. MD 2088 Liu, Charlene Xiaoying
23. CA 2091 Dole, Gina
24. NY 2062 Ma, Karen
25. OH 2017 Mast, Jennifer Mae

### Tournaments Processed
This list was compiled on 02/01/07 (ages are as of that date) and includes all tournaments received through 01/21/07. Due to space limitations, only current members who have played since 11/01/06 are included. This document may not be reproduced without prior written permission of USA Table Tennis. Copyright 2007.

### New Tournaments Included in Ratings
- NJTTC January Open
- MDTTC Butterfly Winter Open
- Power Pong Open
- 6th Annual Holiday Classic
- Brooklyn TTC January Open
- Butterfly East Gate TT Open #1
- 2007 TX Winter Games
- 2007 FL Open Sunburst TT Tour
- 2007 Winter Bowment TT Open
- Maryland Circuit
- TWU Giant RR
- 2006 Shorewood Fall Open
- Northern KY December Giant RR
- South Bend Open
- Texas Wesleyan Open
- Power Pong Open
- Baystate Giant RR
- Maryland Circuit
- Hutchinson 2006 Fall Open

### Ratings Questions?
You can now search for all your results online at www.usatt.org. Should you have any ratings-related questions, contact Felicia Huggins, USATT Headquarters, One Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909. To find out your rating if you cannot access our website, send a self-addressed, stamped postcard with your name and the date of your last tournament. You may also contact us at 719-866-4583 or by e-mail at ratings@usatt.org.
March 3 - Atlanta Giant RR, Atlanta, GA. Contact: Wendell Dillon, 770-923-5110.


gpgoc@iol.com.

March 3 - Texas Wesleyan Open, Ft. Worth, TX. Contact: Jasna Reed, 817-531-7555 (c). jareed@txwes.edu.

March 3-4 - Alaska Open TT Championships, Anchorage, AK. Contact: Karl August, 907-277-8115. actvid@alaska.net.

March 3-4 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

March 10-11 - 2007 City Gate Open, Nashua, NH. Contact: Robert McPartlan, 603-880-6271. info@nashuettc.com

March 11 - Brooklyn TTC March Open, Brooklyn, NY. Contact: Nison Aronov, 718-421-2200. garyguzdenko@yahoo.com.

March 16-18 - Cary Cup

March 17 - Hutchinson 2007 Winter Open, Hutchinson, KS. Contact: Guy Hendrickson, 620-664-0938. hendrickson187@yahoo.com.

March 17-18 - 42nd Robo-Pong St. Joseph Valley Open, South Bend, IN. Contact: Danny Smecker, 574-261-4545. vseemiller@earthlink.net.

March 17-18 - Grand Canyon State Winter Games, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Len Winkler, 602-678-1234. len@tabletennisandmore.com.

State Games

March 17-18 - NJTTC March Open, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavlly, 908-654-9009. tournament@njjtce.org.

March 24 - 2007 Dothan Alaberra Open, Dothan, AL. Contact: Keith Hanley, 850-445-0780. president@dothanntce.org.


March 29-April 1 - 2007 ACUI College Nationals, Columbus, OH. Contact: Willy Lepardino, 850-445-0780. president@nctce.org.


March 31-April 1 - Golden Western Open, Santa Monica, CA. Contact: Ichiro Hashimoto, 818-700-0948. ichiro.hashimoto@csun.edu.


March 31-April 1 - 2007 South Eastern Open, Newport News, VA. Contact: Dan Barrett, 757-729-2335. admin@nntce.com.

April 7-8 - MDTTC Butterfly Spring Open, Gaithersburg, MD. Contact: Wei Xiong, 202-414-8128. wexnia02@hotmail.com.

April 14-15 - PA State Championships Closed, Middletown, PA. Contact: Donald Vastine, 717-944-7154. drjsteve@earthlink.net.

April 14-15 - Maryland Circuit, Eldersburg, MD. Contact: Yvonne Kronlage, 410-489-7291. 0 Star

April 21 - Texas Wesleyan Open, Ft. Worth, TX. Contact: Jasna Reed, 817-531-7555. jareed@txwes.edu.

April 21-22 - Arizona Closed, Phoenix, AZ. Contact: Mark DeWitt, 602-439-0161. 0 Star

April 22 - 2007 Millcreek Giant RR, Erie, PA. Contact: Samuel Steiner, 814-833-8704. samsteinere@compserve.com.

April 27-28 - ATITC League Singles, Sherwood, AR. Contact: Eugene Atia, 501-835-5299. eithalowell.net. 0 Star

April 28-29 - NJ State Championships, Westfield, NJ. Contact: Larry Bavlly, 908-654-9009. tournament@njttce.org. 0 Star

April 28 - Marylvand 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. rayspnnr@verizon.net. 0 Star

May 5 - Maine TT League Spring Open, Lewiston, ME. Contact: Richard Shea, 207-784-4691. ulsalz@locarnet.com. 0 Star

May 6 - No. Kentucky/ Cincinnati 2007 Open, Highland Heights, KY. Contact: Greg Thompson, 859-781-5950. gnotes@hotmail.com. 0 Star

Disparate abilities tend to segregate table tennis club members into distinct groups that may have a nodding acquaintance with each other but rarely face each other across a table. How much fun is it for either player when a typical game score might be 11 to 3? The better player has no incentive to play his best, will tend to lose his concentration due to lack of competitive tension and, even worse, may try to humiliate his hapless opponent. The weaker player, having Bambi's chance in a Lion's den, resorts to wild shots in the forlorn hope of catching an edge and salvaging a smidgen of dignity in a hopeless cause.

The solution we have employed at the NJTTC is a Handicap League. The system was originally developed by Bob Barns, and has been run for the last 20 years by Colin Mallows. It is easy to maintain and administer, is self-leveling, and most importantly is fun for all. A "2000" player can play a "1000" player on an even keel and both have to focus on every point because there is little margin for error.

**NJTTC Handicap League Background and Benefits**

Historically the NJTTC has maintained three conventional leagues during most of the year. During the summer months on Tuesday nights, the Handicap League was developed for a change of pace. All players must be club members and league membership is offered at a reduced rate just for the summer. The league started in the 21-point era, but the system has been adjusted for 11-point games. One of the great features is the remarkable stability of the method. Even if a new player's handicap was estimated incorrectly by the League Guru, in a few weeks his true handicap will emerge. Because of the frequent feedback, players are highly motivated to improve their handicaps by a few points. Handicaps are posted weekly on a bulletin board. Current NJTTC handicaps range from -24 to +25 with the respective USATT rating points being from 1 100-1200 being the midrange handicap levels above 500. With about 1 100-1200 being the midrange handicap levels above 500.

**The Mechanics - How It Works**

There are no teams, everyone plays as an individual (although in principle there is no reason teams couldn't be set up once handicaps were established). It is not essential to turn up players up, though historically the NJTTC has maintained three conventional leagues during most of the year. During the summer months on Tuesday nights, the Handicap League was developed for a change of pace. All players must be club members and league membership is offered at a reduced rate just for the summer. The league started in the 21-point era, but the system has been adjusted for 11-point games. One of the great features is the remarkable stability of the method. Even if a new player's handicap was estimated incorrectly by the League Guru, in a few weeks his true handicap will emerge. Because of the frequent feedback, players are highly motivated to improve their handicaps by a few points. Handicaps are posted weekly on a bulletin board. Current NJTTC handicaps range from -24 to +25 with the respective USATT rating points being from 1 100-1200 being the midrange handicap levels above 500. With about 1 100-1200 being the midrange handicap levels above 500.

**Handicap League Levels the Playing Field for Club Members**

By Colin Mallows and Daniel Guttman, from NJTTC in Westfield, N.J.

For example if the stronger player is at -3 and the weaker player is +6, the difference is 9. Take off one point to make 8 and divide by 2 to get 4. Use this final number 4 to determine the starting scores. In this case the weaker player (W) starts out at -2 and the stronger player (S) starts out at +2 for each game in the match. In other words from a -2 score S needs a total of 13 points to win the 11 point game since he is starting out below zero, while W needs only 9 points.

For handicaps of say -10 and +4, the difference is 14. This is already even, so we just divide by 2 to get 7. So W starts with +3 and S with -4. When the difference in starting scores is odd (as here),the stronger player goes down the higher number (i.e. for a gap of 7 it is "+3, -4" not "+4, -3"). And when the difference between the starting scores is odd, the player who wins first serve gets only one serve to begin with and then they alternate every two serves as usual.

When the handicap difference is over 24, the weaker player's starting score is reduced to +6. The stronger player's negative starting score remains as before. We have found with experience that when the difference in skill is this large, this adjustment preserves the property that each player has an even chance of winning.

Handicaps change by 1 point for each match won or lost. In a given week if a player wins 3 matches and loses none his handicap goes down by 3 points (e.g. from -1 to -4) the next week. If he loses 2 matches and wins 1 his handicap goes up by a net of 1 point (e.g. from +6 to +7).

Handicap league matches start at 8pm at the NJTTC, so you have to be present or call in to be assigned to a group for round robin play. To mix things up we alternate the way we set up the round robin groups. Every other week, players of similar strength are grouped together, the top four or five on one table, then the next group, and so on. In alternate weeks we mix the players up, though we try to avoid pairing the very strongest against the weakest players. We typically get 20-25 players a week so we can fill 5-6 tables with four or five players each. At the end of the year we run a double elimination tournament and give trophies to the winner and runner-up.

In this league everyone wins about half of their matches; the better players have to stay on their toes and the weaker ones will often beat opponents against whom they wouldn't have a prayer in normal circumstances. A good rule of thumb if you are starting a league from scratch is that every 100 USATT rating points are worth about 2-3 handicap points. If you make a mistake in assigning a handicap, it will resolve itself in due course. The rationale for dividing the handicap difference by 2 is that without this feature the handicaps would fluctuate widely from week to week because people would win all their matches one week and lose them all the next. We have found that with our present system handicaps are very stable. An improving player will see his handicap go down steadily. For comments or questions contact Daniel Guttman at 732-283-8700 or dan@bmsgo.coin.

**Quick Review**

1. Divide the handicap difference by 2 after rounding off by 1 if odd, this gives the difference between the starting scores.
2. If the result is odd, the stronger player goes down the higher number (i.e. for a gap of 7 it is "+3, -4" NOT "+4, -3"), and the first server gets only one serve.
3. For a handicap difference of over 24, the weaker player starts +6, and no higher.
4. Post the new ratings weekly.
5. Everyone has a great time.

**Letter from Iraq:**

We are the Seabees of the 9th Construction Regiment stationed in Al Tappaqadum, Iraq. There are six of us here and we all love table tennis. We searched and searched but were unable to find a table so we did what Seabees do best, we built one out of scrap lumber. Although the bounce isn't quite up to standards it is the best we have. Now we can finally have a little down time and play the game we all enjoy so much. I have attached a picture of a couple of the crew enjoying a game. Keep up the good work.

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN, 9th Naval Construction Regiment, Al Tappaqadum, Iraq
2006 Hall of Fame Inductee:  
KHOA NGUYEN

By Tim Boggan, USATT Historian

Khoa Nguyen (L) accepts Hall of Fame Plaque from Tim Boggan

After immigrating to the U.S. from Vietnam in 1977, Khoa Nguyen, who'd been coached by his father John since taking up the game at age 9, won, at 14, his first U.S. Closed title—the 1980 U-15 Doubles with Brandon Olson. The following September, after he’d finished 1st at the AAU Under-15 Junior Olympics, Nguyen, “a 9th-grader at Santa Clara High School in California,” was named Top Junior of the Month. Here’s local observer Yim Gee to tell us a little more about this “unknown, under-rated junior”:

“At 4’10” and 95 pounds, Khoa looks small but is a master looper. He spins the ball with authority and cleverly moves his opponent around with deadly ball placement. Mental toughness is his greatest strength. He is calm under pressure and always has that shy and satisfying boyish smile after each match.... He practices 4 days during the week at home (1 to 2 hours each day) and plays matches at weekends at San Jose State University....”

[As an aside, nine years later he’d graduate from San Jose State with a degree in computer science....but back to the future.]

At the Dec., ’81 Closed, Khoa showed versatility in winning the U-17 Doubles with Scott Butler and the U-15 Doubles with Sean O’Neill. He wasn’t so unknown any more—especially after he, Scott and Jimmy Butler, Brandon Olson, and Sean had accepted that 1982 invitation to train in China for two months under two-time World Champion Guo Yuehua.

By this time, with his usual determination and focus, Khoa was in the process of developing one of the best backhand loops in the country. This along with his speed and increasingly powerful forehand gave him a two-winged attack that helped him in 1985 and ’86 to finish 2nd to O’Neill at the National Sports Festival, and in ’86 to win the first of his two ACU-I National Intercollegiate Championships.

1987 was also a big year for Khoa. At the New Delhi World’s, aided by an ever-developing up-to-the-table aggressive block defense, he was 9-5 in Swaything Cup play—with a comeback, double-match-point-down, deuce-in-the-3rd win over the Brazilian #2, Hugo Hoyama. At the Pan-Am Games he won a Gold in the Mixed with Insohk Bhuhan. And at year’s end he came close to being our National Champion—lost in 5 to the eventual winner O’Neill, from whom he’d win the Under-22’s.

O.K., time for Khoa to go out and make a living. Which he does, but still manages at the annual ’92 Vietnamese New Year Invitational to almost upset World #22, 2800+-rated Johnny Huang, losing 24-22 in the 3rd. But, never mind—they’ll be another of these Vietnamese Internationals next year and Nguyen’s win will make him $800 richer.

At this time, Khoa was working as a programmer for Sun Microsystems. After they’d given him time off to prepare for the 1992 North American Olympics Qualifier, he responded by downing all six Canadians, including their best, Joe Ng and Horatio Pintea. Then on finishing 1st Alternate behind Jimmy Butler and O’Neill, he began the never-ending process of trying to improve his serves.

Khoa’s ’90 play climaxed in 1995 when, with encouragement from his wife Pauline, and with the help of his training and technique coach, Per Johansson, he’d dedicated himself to preparing for the Tianjin World’s. “Practicing my backhand footwork,” he said, “helps my forehand too.” At the Costa Mesa Chinese New Year Championships in Feb., “the relentless ferocity” of his “two-winged lightning attacks” gave him a 3-zip win over a dazed U.S. Champion David Zhuhang. Then at the Mar. Louisiana Open, “he joined the ranks of 2700+ rated players in the U.S.”—beating 3-time U.S. Champion Butler in both the Open and the Allstar Men’s, and splitting matches with former U.S. Open Champ Cheng Yinghua. This great showing prompted Jimmy to say, “Khoa may be the best player in the U.S. right now.”

In a 1995 summer interview, Khoa told Editor Larry Hodges that, for the first time, he’d started to do “lots of physical training—mostly distance running...[and] weight training.” Also, now a sponsor (no relation) was providing him with a Nguyen- Nguyen situation. Except that at the World’s he wasn’t picked to play even one Team tie. Though he’d finished 5th in the Tryouts, by Tianjin-time he was rated U.S. #2 and so wasn’t happy about being completely left out. He then proved his worth in Singles with a 3-1 record—topped by a strong win over the Croatian International, Atikovic.

In pursuit of his Olympic goal, Khoa “had spent much of August, October and November training at Nisse Sandberg’s Angby Club in Sweden (sometimes with [former European Champion] Mikael Appelgren).” Also, he and Butler “had represented the U.S. in team tournaments in Europe during this ’95 Fall season.” Which camaraderie didn’t prevent Khoa at the National’s from powering balls through Jimmy to reach the Men’s final. There Zhuhang’s sharp angle play helped him to successfully defend his title. But in further milestones for Khoa, he and Tawny Banh reached the final of the Mixed; he and Darko Rop, his lefty Tianjin teammate, took the Men’s Doubles from Defending Champions Zhuhang and Dan Seeimiller. Here, too, Khoa was awarded the Rich Livingston Sportsmanship Award, and was named Player of the Year.

But the 1996 Olympic Trials was a big disappointment for Nguyen. In Singles play, he was going along 5-0 undefeated when he was upset by Darko. Then he lost deciding matches that forced him to become, as he was in ’92, the 1st Alternate. Later, to qualify for the Olympics in Doubles play, he and David had to beat Canadians Huang and Ng, but—bummer—they lost 18 in the 5th.

So, say goodbye to serious competition in the 1990’s. But hello to politics; for, in 1998, Khoa is elected for his first stint on the USATT Board of Directors.

At the Pacific Rim Open in Nov., 1999, Khoa, now 33, gives notice in losing to Zhuhang, 18 in the 5th, that come the new millennium he’ll be back. His aim? To make the Olympics that’s been naggingly eluding him. Neoforma.com, the Internet company he now worked for, was
cooperative, as again was Pauline, by now mother to their two young daughters, Khamille and Khassidy (spelled with an initial Kh instead of a C—this, I presume, in homage to a heritage line that included his brothers Khai and Khoi, if not his competition coach, called, in-KHON-gruously, Roger). So, seized again by this mania to succeed, Khoa dedicated himself to a “grueling training schedule” where many nights he had “fewer than 4 hours of sleep.”

So how’d he do? In the beginning, beautifully—came 1 in the U.S. Qualifier where one observer filming him spoke of his “World-Top-100 offense.” “Khoa’s loop is a ‘body shot’ that primarily uses waist, torso and shoulder rotation to generate forward speed with topspin control.” But at the 2000 North American Singles Trials he was eliminated in the Preliminaries. However, he had one more chance—and, paired with Cheng Yinghua, who marveled at how much Khoa had accomplished with limited opportunities, he came through, would be going to Sydney. As a bonus he took the North American Singles Championship from Eric Owens, and thereafter would represent the U.S. in the World Cup in Yangzhou, China.

Khoa was as ready for the Olympics as he could be—and, as an induction photo I showed of him with Khoa at his Sydney send-off party, so, happily, were Pauline and the kids. But the competition there was just too tough...Still, participating in an Olympics was something he and his family would always remember.

What? He’s not gonna go through all that agony, that manic Olympic preparation again, is he? Yep. He hasn’t qualified for the Singles yet, right? Neofroma, for whom he was working maybe 50 hours a week, granted him a good luck leave of absence. So with his customary perseverance, he again went into training. At the Mar. 2003 Pan Am and World Team Trials, Khoa described by Hodges as being one of our “best pure athletes” and having “the most picture-perfect form in the U.S.” is 4-1 in matches when Darko again stops him, precipitates him into a series of losses. But at the Ap. $5,000 California Open, showing his smooth, “effortless” style, acquired through years of effort, he survives a controversial match with Jamaican-born Michael Hyatt and comes runner-up to Fan Yi Yong. In Aug., he’s at the Western Open. In Sept., at the North American Team’s. In Dec., at the National’s.

Finally, in Feb., 2004 comes the Vancouver Olympic Singles Trials Khoa’s been priming for. He loses to Huang and Bence Csaba whom he must beat to qualify. On they go into the 71 and 72 rounds. But at the $5,000 National Open in the Northern California TMS League because of, as he says publicly, “family and work commitments.” So don’t look for him to try to play in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Time to rest on his laurels, right?

And yet Khoa told me he was at first reluctant to accept this Dec. award while he was still a player. But what kind of fast-footwork dodge was that? For Cheng Yinghua, Lily Yip, and David Zhuang were at the time of their Inductions active tournament participants; and Khoa had just this summer accepted—with Azmy Ibrahim’s warm welcome—Induction into the California Hall of Fame. But, o.k., I understand that Khoa’s self-identity is of course much defined by his role as a very accomplished player—he doesn’t want to give that up, and so resists retirement, or any suggestion of it. So, Pauline, I don’t want to alarm you. But Khoa hasn’t won an Olympic Singles match yet. And he’s only 40.

As for our audience here tonight, please affirm with your applause that this well-deserved Award honors, but does not close, this ever-serious Inductee’s memorable 25-year career. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Olympian Khoa Nguyen.

### USATT Board Motions & Votes

**For minutes of meetings and all motions and votes, see [www.usatt.org/organization/minutes](http://www.usatt.org/organization/minutes).**

#### October 2006 Email Votes

**Motion 1: USATT registered agent change**
- **Motioner:** Tong Lee; **Secondor:** Sheri Pittman
- **Motion:** Moved that National Registered Agents, Inc. replace Primo Madrigal as the Registered Agent for United States Table Tennis Association, Inc in the State of Illinois.
- **Rationale:** Primo Madrigal who was USATT registered agent for many years requested to be removed as registered agent and moved to Philippines. According to the Secretary of State of Illinois, “Any change of registered agent must be by resolution adopted by the board of directors.”

**Motion passed: 12-0-0-1**

**In favor:** Jing W, Joseph W, George B, Khao N, Whitney P, Robert B, Barney R, Tim B, Sherry P, Tong L, Ashu J, DELL S; **Against:** None; **Abstain:** None; **No vote:** Lily Y

**Motion 2: Revision to Bylaw Section 16 E**
- **Motioner:** Sheri Pittman; **Secondor:** Tong Lee
- **Motion:** Move to revise the Bylaws, Chapter VIII, Section 16 E, as follows: After the sentence, insert “Those elected to these positions in 2006 shall serve a two-year term.”

**Motion failed: 7-2-1-3** (Bylaw changes require 9 votes to pass.)

**In favor:** George B, Khao N, Tim B, Sherry P, Tong L, Ashu J, Robert B; **Against:** Jing W, Barney R; **Abstain:** Joseph W; **No vote:** Lily Y, Whitney P, DELL S.

**Motion 3: Revision to Bylaw**
- **Motioner:** Sheri Pittman; **Secondor:** Tong Lee
- **Motion:** Whereas, matters before the USATT Board of Directors have prevented the 2006 officer election process from proceeding according to the schedule mandated in USATT Bylaws and Standing Rules; It is hereby moved that USATT Bylaws be amended by the addition of Article VIII, Section 16, Subsection N, to read as follows:
  1. Notwithstanding any language in these Bylaws to the contrary, all deadlines pertaining to the 2006 election of Directors are hereby set aside; 2. Even though the schedule of the 2006 election of officers is not in time compliance with previously adopted USATT Bylaws and Standing Rules, the election shall be fully valid, and may not be challenged on the grounds of timeliness; 3. The Nominating/Elections Committee is directed to proceed with all possible expedition; 4. Notwithstanding the provisions in Subsection K of this section, the number of signatures or emails necessary to include a candidate not selected by the Nominating and Elections Committee or the Board shall be reduced from 150 to 100 for the 2006 election of Directors.

**Motion failed: 8-2-0-3** (Bylaw changes require 9 votes to pass.)

**In favor:** Sheri P, George B, Khao N, Tim B, Tong L, DELL S, Whitney P, Robert B; **Against:** Jing W, Barney R; **Abstain:** None; **No vote:** Lily Y, Ashu J, Joseph W.
By Wednesday, October 25, the Board will be notified of the results of the election. All ballots must be received by the Accounting Firm by Friday, November 3rd.


At the election, Ballots, Nominating emails must include the same member conduct matter be referred to the Ethics and Disciplinary Committee pursuant to Section 2 of this Chapter.


Motion passed: 12-0-0-1


December, 2006 Email votes

Motion: EA Committee Co-chair

Proposed by: Sheri Pittman; Seconded by: Khoa Nguyen

For 2006 Election of Directors, the Nominating and Elections Committee will be forwarded to the Board on Thursday, October 19, but not before approval of these Bylaw changes. At that time the committee will also forward to the Board the names of potential candidates who were nominated but not selected by the Nominating Committee. These dates are subject to change at the sole discretion of the USATT Board of Directors. The Board Members Absent: Jiing Wang, Lily Yip, Khoa Nguyen.

Motion passed: 13-0-0-0


USATT Board Meeting

Motion: USAIT Bylaw Change

Proposed by: Whitney Ping; Seconded by: Tong Lee


Abstain: None; No vote: Lily Y, Jiing W, Barney R.

Motion: USATT Bylaw Change

Proposed by: Whitney Ping; Seconded by: Khoa Nguyen

The members of the Nominating/Elections Committee are authorized to conduct the 2006 Election of National Athletes' Representatives to the USA Table Tennis Board of Directors via email. It shall be so done in such a way so that no voter is compelled to unwillingly waive any degree of confidentiality. The American Table Tennis General Council and the Chairman of the Rules & Officials Committee will be notified. Motion passed: 12-0-0-1

In favor: Ashu J, Khoa N, Whitney P, Tong L, George B, Dell S, Sherr P, Lily Y, Joseph W, Robert B, Tim B, Jiing W; Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: Barney R.

December, 2006 Email votes

Motion: EA Committee Co-chair

Proposed by: Sheri Pittman; Seconded by: Khoa Nguyen


USATT Board Meeting

Motion: USAIT Bylaw Change

Proposed by: Whitney Ping; Seconded by: Tong Lee


Abstain: None; No vote: Lily Y, Jiing W, Barney R.

Motion passed: 12-0-0-1


November 2006 Email Votes

Motion: USAIT Bylaw Change

Proposed by: Ashu Jain; Seconded by: Khoa Nguyen

Moved to strike Section 25(o) of the Standing Rules for the Nominating and Elections Committee and replace it with the following:

For 2006 only, the chairman of the Nominating/Elections Committee is authorized to conduct the 2006 Election of National Athletes' Representatives to the USA Table Tennis Board of Directors via email. He shall do so in such a way so that no voter is compelled to unwillingly waive any degree of confidentiality. The chairman must strictly honor confidentiality in all circumstances, sharing pursuant email votes only with the USAIT General Council and the chairman of the Rules & Officials Committee.

Motion passed: 12-0-0-1

In favor: Ashu J, Khoa N, Whitney P, Tong L, George B, Dell S, Sherr P, Lily Y, Joseph W, Robert B, Tim B, Jiing W; Against: None; Abstain: None; No vote: Barney R.

December, 2006 Email votes

Motion: USAIT Bylaw Change

Proposed by: Whitney Ping; Seconded by: Tong Lee


Abstain: None; No vote: Lily Y, Jiing W, Barney R.

Motion passed: 12-0-0-1


USA Table Tennis Magazine • March/April 2007 17
World Junior Championships
Cairo, Egypt • Dec. 12-17, 2006 • By Houshang Bozorgzadeh, USA National Coach

It was a pleasure of mine to recently coach the USA Boys’ team at the World Junior Table Tennis Championships held December 12-17 in Cairo, Egypt. The three athletes who represented the United States were Joe Cochran, John Leach, and Trevor Runyan. The event brought back memories from 30 years ago when young Americans Danny and Ricky Seemiller, and Eric Bogdan represented the United States at the World Championships. Many in the international table tennis community felt that there was no place in the modern table tennis world for such players. That was before the USA team qualified for the first division and remained in or near that division for 15 years. Danny and Eric made lots of headlines in the world-wide table tennis community. During this trip to Egypt, many of the coaches were around during that era and asked what Danny and Eric doing, how were they, and so on. Some wondered if the style that they used was still common among junior players in the United States. Their talents, a style that was unique at that time (the “Seemiller” or “American” grip) and unfamiliar to the international community, all contributed to make them a “phenomenon” at international tournaments.

When I was recently asked to coach the USA Junior team, many of these memories returned. For years, a very real rivalry existed between Europe and Asia. Many times the Asian teams tasted defeat at the hands of the European teams and players. Based on my perception of the World Junior Championships, the gap between the Asian teams and European teams has grown. Japan and Korea have made great strides, and it appears that they will be strong for the next 10 years in the World Championships. A few Europeans may rise to the top, but they will be the exception rather than a product of a “competitively equal table tennis program” in their country.

For the past 25 years, the USA table tennis has tried to reduce the gap between the USA table tennis and the Europeans. Based on the results of our international matches, the USA table tennis seems to be “treading water.” Progresses of our junior teams have been consistent with the progress/results of our men’s and women’s teams. Especially our men’s team, which is ranked #43 in the world even though we have many top international players who now live in the United States. That position doesn’t seem to be justified.

Our Junior National Team traveled to Egypt full of ambition and determination. Unfortunately, they lacked centralized practice or formal preparation prior to an international tournament of this stature. Of the approximately 250 competitors at the tournament, our players as individuals were among the lowest seeds.

As coach, I felt that any victories or accomplishments should be considered by the United States table tennis community as “exceeding expectations.” Assume that a world-class sprinter has a top performance of 9.7 seconds in the 100 meter dash. On a bad day he may slip to 9.8 or even 9.9 seconds. Other sprinters may peak at 10.3 seconds, and on a bad day slip to 10.6 or 10.7 seconds. To expect our junior table tennis players “to achieve a 9.8 or 9.9 performance” is unrealistic. At this level in table tennis, every point of every game counts. At this stage of their careers, even on their best day our players cannot be expected to beat the best players.

The Chinese boys entered the World Junior Championships with no ratings, and yet they won all events except the boys’ singles final. Only the spectacular performance by Kenta Matsudaira from Japan prevented a clean sweep by the Chinese. Kenta’s victory in my mind has to be one of the biggest upsets in table tennis history.

I had the opportunity to ask the Chinese coach how they continue to be so good. His answer was simple. They have 15 million players registered in their high school table tennis championships. Comparatively, we have a relative handful competing in the United States. When I was in Shanghai last year for the World Championships, I witnessed a public park that had one thousand cement ping-pong tables available for public use. When people use the tables, they brought their own bag with their own net, paddles and balls. The Chinese juniors at the tournament probably came from this generation of table tennis enthusiasts!

A Japanese official told me that in his country, a table tennis enthusiast donated three million dollars for junior development. He is re-enforcing that gift with a one million dollar gift for each of the next 10 years. This gift is entirely for junior development.

Nikolay Novikov, a Russian coach who was coaching the Egypt team at this tournament, said that in Russia there are more than 150 full-time coaches who teach in schools and clubs. The Russian coaches are compensated based on the performance of their students during national tournaments.

The coach of the German junior team at this tournament told me that most of the junior team members compete in the league’s top table tennis league. At this young age, the juniors are already financially stable.

The English contingent brought a television crew. London is the host of the 2012 Olympics, and this television crew followed the careers of the young English players that are hoping for Olympic medals in the 2012 Olympics. By contrast, our USA Junior Team arrived from different parts of the United States. The hope of our junior team seems to rest with parents. I believe that parents are the primary financial support related to each player’s individual development. Parents take their kids to tournaments, to their club for practice, and so on. Centralized, structured support of our juniors is non-existent compared to other countries. Even the resident training program, once active at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, is no more.

In evaluating our team, I would give each athlete an A. Each player fought hard, and consistently demonstrated good sportsmanship. We lost all dueces games, which of course can be discouraging. The best 16 junior teams in the world qualified for this tournament, and our junior team finished 14th out of the 16 teams. To qualify for this tournament should be considered a success.

At one time, Egypt was one of the primary table tennis countries, and in fact hosted the World Championships in 1939. This 2006 World Junior Table Tennis Championships was excellent. The competition was held in three gyms, each with a 3000-4000 seating capacity for spectators. The venue was in the middle of the city of Cairo. Unfortunately, few spectators took advantage of the opportunity to see these athletes. Even the boys’ singles final, a spectacular match, had few spectators. The gym was nearly empty for the all-Chinese girls’ final.

A real success of this tournament was the 40+ volunteer medical students, all of whom spoke perfect English. They were courteous and supportive of all athletes and participants. Hopefully the success of this tournament will benefit the Egypt table tennis association for the long term.

I’m excited that the World Junior Table Tennis Championship for 2007 will be held at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Two representatives from the Dennis Davis’ (event director) staff gave an excellent one-hour promotional presentation for the 2007 championships. It is a real opportunity for the United States to promote table tennis in our country, not to mention the local high schools in the area. The challenge to prepare our players for this event is great, but represents an exciting opportunity for USATT.

For singles, doubles, and mixed doubles, 22 countries were represented, with 16 countries in the team event.

Joe Cochran: Joe had difficulties with service during many matches, but made progress by the end of the tournament. His match against Steffan Mengel from Germany was one of his best matches during the boys’ singles event.
USA Team at the World Junior Championships, L-R: Trevor Runyan, Coach Houshang Bozorgzadeh, John Leach, Joe Cochran.

John Leach: John's research and knowledge of the opponents made him the unofficial encyclopedia for our team. He acted as our "scout" for upcoming matches. He was willing and able to accept constructive criticism for his performance. His best match was against the Polish player Szymon Malecki during the boys' singles event.

Trevor Runyan: For this tournament, Trevor started slowly but finished strong. Trevor won two matches for us against Congo in the team event. Also, Trevor went five games in the boys' singles event against Johan Sondell from Sweden.

After being with our three athletes for 12 days, I'm confident that each has potential to be among the best in the world. Hard work, practice, frequent tournament participation, and a stronger support system will help lead to much success at the World Junior Championships in Palo Alto, California.

For complete results, refer to the ITTF web site at www.ittf.com.

Medal Count
China: 6 gold, 5 silver, and 3 bronze
Japan: 1 gold, 2 silver, and 3 bronze
Germany: 4 bronze
Hungary: 1 bronze
Poland: 1 bronze
Russia: 1 bronze

Boys' Teams
1. China
2. Japan
3. Russia
4. Germany
5. Chinese-Taipei
6. Korea Republic
7. France
8. England
9. Poland
10. Australia
11. Egypt
12. Brazil
13. Chile
14. USA
15. Tunisia
16. Congo

Girls' Teams
1. China
2. Japan
3. Romania
4. France
5. Poland
6. China-Taipei
7. Russia
8. England
9. Japan
10. Malaysia
11. Korea
12. Brazil
13. New Zealand
14. USA
15. Venezuela
16. Congo

Boys' Singles - Final: Kenta Matsudaira (JPN) d. Xu Ke (CHN), 4-2; SF: Matsudaira d. Dimitri Ovtcharov (GER), 6,6,7,7; Xu d. Hidetoshi Oya (JPN), 6,8,5,2.

Girls' Singles - Final: Feng Yalan (CHN) d. Wen Jia (CHN), 7-8,12,-4,8,6; SF: Feng d. Yang Wu, 9,8,1,7; Wen (China) d. Mu Zi (CHN), 7,-4,7,-3,9,5,6.

Boys' Doubles - Final: Jiang Halyang/Hao Wu (CHN) d. Xu Ke/Xu Rulfeng (CHN), 6,-3,7,3,5,8; SF: Jiang/Hao d. Marcos Freitas/Andre Silva (POR), -1,2,4,4,9; Xu/Xu d. Kenji Matsudaira/Hidetoshi Oya (JPN), 14,8,7,6.

Girls' Doubles - Final: Mu Zi/Chen Jia (CHN) d. Feng Yalan/Wu Yang (CHN), 6,7,4,11; SF: Mu/Wen d. Yuji Ishigaki/Meomi Terui (JPN), 6,-9,5,8,-8,11; Feng/Wu d. Amelie Solja/Rosalia Stahr (GER), -8,3,10,8,8.

Boys' Doubles - Final: Mu Zi/Wen Jia (CHN) d. Feng Yalan/Wu Yang (CHN), 6,7,4,11; SF: Mu/Wen d. Yuji Ishigaki/Meomi Terui (JPN), 6,-9,5,8,-8,11; Feng/Wu d. Amelie Solja/Rosalia Stahr (GER), -8,3,10,8,8.

Girls' Doubles - Final: Mu Zi/Wen Jia (CHN) d. Feng Yalan/Wu Yang (CHN), 6,7,4,11; SF: Mu/Wen d. Yuji Ishigaki/Meomi Terui (JPN), 6,-9,5,8,-8,11; Feng/Wu d. Amelie Solja/Rosalia Stahr (GER), -8,3,10,8,8.

Mixed Doubles - Final: Xu Ke/Mu Zi (CHN) d. Jiang Halyang/Wen Jia (CHN), 7,2,7,6; SF: Xu/Mu d. Hao Wu/Feng Yanlen (CHN), -3,14,-9,8,-8,7,8; Jiang/Wen d. Ruwen Filus/Solja (GER), 6,2,6,4.

Schaumburg RR Open
Schaumburg, IL • Oct. 7, 2006 • By John S. Oh

It was obvious that the 8-player peer group round-robin format of the tournament held at Schaumburg Park District, IL on Saturday, October 7, 2006 was a favorite of players, as the 64 spots available were filled two weeks before the event. The level of competition was quite high as a respectable rating of 2074 had to settle for being the top seed of Group B!

Four lower rating groups, E to H, started at 9:00 am, and four higher rating groups, A to D, started at 2:00 pm. Group B finished while Group A was still battling, and when all scores were counted for Group B, Patrick Yee, rated 1889, seeded second from the bottom, was on top! Pat is a Schaumburg club member who can no longer be called a junior as he had his 18th birthday last week. He had beaten everyone in Group B except Aaron Avery, his 18th birthday last week. He had beaten the top two seeds, but it was an unexpected outcome indeed, for the first two places.

As the tournament wound down, we were all watching the final match of Group A between Lukasz Fita, rated 1889, seeded second from the bottom, was on top! Pat is a Schaumburg club member who can no longer be called a junior as he had his 18th birthday last week. He had beaten everyone in Group B except Aaron Avery, his 18th birthday last week. He had beaten the top two seeds, but it was an unexpected outcome indeed, for the first two places.

We extend our appreciation and special thanks to Butterfly as the ball sponsor. We also extend our appreciation and special thanks to Derek Borysiewicz for donating $100 that increased the prize rewards.

Class A: 1st Lukasz Fita; 2nd Sasa Drinice; 3rd AJ Brewer.
Class B: 1st Patrick Yee; 2nd Juno Zhao; 3rd Dobrivoj Kljac.
Class C: 1st Adil Dhanani; 2nd Andre Khailo.
Class D: 1st Phillip Moy; 2nd Boguslaw Owsiasl.
Class E: 1st Ryan Browne; 2nd Jeff Schiff.
Class F: 1st Brett Ogorzalek; 2nd Mark Hoffman.
Class G: 1st Wesley Chang; 2nd Slava Tenenbaum.
Class H: 1st Marian Harasimowicz; 2nd Manny Lau.
Croatian ITTF Pro Tour
Zagreb, CRO • Jan. 16-20, 2007

Men's Singles – Final: Hao Shuai (CHN) d. Vladimir Samsonov (BLR), 7,7-10,9,11-10; SF: Hao d. Aloexei Smirnov (RUS), 8,4-5,11; Samsonov d. Ma Long (CHN), 6,9-3,11,9-12-6; Hao d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 9-10,2-6,5-6;

8ths: Ma Long d. Wang Linyi (CHN), 8-8,9,5,12-9; Chen d. Ko Lai Chak (HKG), 9,7-7,8,9,10-4-9-6; Wang Hao d. Joo Se Hyuk (KOR), 6-3,5-7,14-7,4; Ma d. Hao Shuai (CHN), 10-8,9-5,5;

8ths: Wang Linyi d. Trinko Keen (NED), 8-7,7-9,2-4; Ryu d. Wang Liqin (CHN), 9,4,8,4; Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 6,9-5,10-4-9-6; Wang Hao d. Joo Se Hyuk (KOR), 6-3,5-7,14-7,4; Ma d. Hao Shuai (CHN), 10-8,9-5,5;

Slovenia ITTF Pro Tour
Velenje, SLO • Jan. 23-27, 2007

Men's Singles – Final: Wang Hao (CHN) d. Ryu Seung Min (KOR), 9,7-5,7; SF: Wang Hao d. Ma Lin (CHN), 8,10-9,9; Ryu d. Li Ching (HKG), -7,10,5-4-12; QF: Ryu d. Wang Liqin (CHN), 9,4,8,4; Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 6,9-5,10-4-9-6; Wang Hao d. Joo Se Hyuk (KOR), 6-3,5-7,14-7,4; Ma d. Hao Shuai (CHN), 10-8,9-5,5;

8ths: Wang Liqin d. Trinko Keen (NED), 8-7,7-9,2-4; Ryu d. Jiang Tinay (HKG), 8-7,7-2,10; Li d. Lee Jung Woo (KOR), 7-6,8,7; Chen d. Ko Lai Chak (HKG), 11-5,9,8; Wang Hao d. Ma Long (CHN), 9,5-5,7,2,7; Joo d. Richard Vyborny (CZE), 7-6,6,14-5; Hao d. Oh Sang Eun (KOR), 7-6,10-9,8; Ma d. Bojan Tojic (SVN), 9,6,2,7.

Women's Doubles – Final: Wang Liqin/Chen Qi (CHN) d. Ko Lai Chak/Li Ching (HKG), 8-6,6,9,8; SF: Chen d. Bojan Tojic/Roko Tosic (SVN/HRV), 5,7-4,9; Ko/Li d. Slobadan Grujic/Aleksandar Karakasevic (SRB), 8,6,9,6,10; QF: Liu d. Li Xue (FRA), 8,6,5,8; Wang d. Ma Lin (CHN), 6-9,10.

Women's Doubles – Final: Guo Yitc (CHN) d. Zhang Yining (CHN), 9-10,11-10,9; Guo Yue d. Li Xiaoxia (CHN), 7-9,10-6,3; QF: Guo Yue d. Jiang Huajun (HKG), 8,9,10,10.

Women's Doubles – Final: Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN) d. Guo Yue/Li Xue (CHN), 8,9,10,10; QF: Guo Yue d. Jiang Huajun (HKG), 8,9,10,10.

Women's Doubles – Final: Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN) d. Chen Qi/Ma Lin (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Wang Liqin/Li Xiaoxia (CHN) d. Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN) d. Chen Qi/Ma Lin (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Wang Liqin/Li Xiaoxia (CHN) d. Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN) d. Chen Qi/Ma Lin (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Wang Liqin/Li Xiaoxia (CHN) d. Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN) d. Chen Qi/Ma Lin (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Wang Liqin/Li Xiaoxia (CHN) d. Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.

Women's Doubles – Final: Zhang Yining/Guo Yan (CHN) d. Chen Qi/Ma Lin (CHN), 9,10,8,2,6; QF: Li d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8; Zhang d. Chen Qi (CHN), 9,7,6,8.
Concord Cup Youth Open
Concord, CA • Nov. 5, 2006 • By Phil Schafer

The 2006 Concord Cup Youth Open 1-star tournament on Nov. 5 attracted a record field of 101 players under age 22. This was a remarkable feat, considering it was the third consecutive week that a tournament was conducted in the San Francisco Bay Area. The $30 for four events entry fee, lots of low-rated events and the host Concord Club's reputation for conducting quality tournaments were major reasons for the large draw.

An additional lure was the Club Performance Competition which earned a plaque and a $100 Butterfly Online gift certificate for the club whose players posted the best overall performances in terms of first, second and semifinalist in each event.

The Indian Community Center (ICC), coached by Rajul Sheth, won the Club Performance Competition with 98 points, edging out Concord which had 91.5 points. Other club finishes were sunset (47.5), SF Chinatown (32), Berkeley (15), Palo Alto (15) and Lincoln Square (0). ICC’s 25 players were particularly strong in the low-rated events while Concord’s 35 players scored well in the higher events.

The best individual performances were turned in by Concord’s Sam Chan, who earned 17 points with an Under 1250 first and an Under 1500 second, and independent Raymond Mar who earned 17 points with first in Under 750 and a semifinalist in Under 1000 and Under 1250.

Tournament Director Michael Boot had plenty of help from Referee Joseph Yick, Data Processing Manager Henry Chan, Club Coach Bill Lui, Sanh Banh, Phil Schafer and many other CTTC volunteers who assisted with the draw preparation and facility setup.

The tournament ended by 6:30 pm despite having over half of the players (56) entered in the Under 750 event...not bad for a one-day 12-event tournament with 14 tables! We greatly appreciate the support of Butterfly Online for supplying the Club Performance Competition gift certificate and four dozen balls. Thanks also go to the City of Concord for printing the entry forms.

Open: 1st Trevor Runyan (C); 2nd Jessica Yick (C); 3-4: Stephanie Chow (SU) & Ankur Patel (IC).


U2000: 1st Stephanie Chow (SU); 2nd David Chow (SU); 3-4: Jessica Yick (C) & Vincent Banh (C).

U1750: 1st Sylvan Guo (SU); 2nd Jeremy Nau (C).

U1500: 1st Brian Chen (P); 2nd Sam Chan (C).

U1250: 1st Sam Chan (C); 2nd Kanon Lee (SU).

U1000: 1st Parth Upadhyay (IC); 2nd Aarsh Vyas (IC).

U750: 1st Raymond Mar (NC); 2nd Eshaan Bhalla (IC).

U500: 1st Erica Tran (IC); 2nd Etienne Yu (C).

U250: 1st Saathchi Bhalla (IC); 2nd Prithvi Guruprasad (IC).

U7200 Doubles: 1st Simon Cai/Kevin Lin; 2nd Kip Leung/Jerry Li.

U1400 Doubles: 1st Prithvi Guruprasad/Parth Upadhyay; 2nd Erica Tran/Arjun Desai.

Club Codes: Berkeley (B), Concord (C), Indian Community Center (IC), Lincoln Square (LS), Palo Alto (P), SF Chinatown (CT), Sunset (SU), No Club (NC).

Club Performance Competition (Plaque + $100 Butterfly gift certificate)

1st Indian Community Center (98 pts); 2nd Concord (91.5); 3rd Sunset (47.5); 4th SF Chinatown (32); 5th Berkeley (15); 6th Palo Alto (15); 7th Lincoln Square (7). (Each 1st place = 10 points, 2nd place = 7, semifinalist = 5).

Dayton Butterfly Giant RR Open
Dayton, OH • Nov. 4, 2006 • By John Dichiaro

Another November, another C Note Battle. The fifth rendition of Dayton's popular "Battle of the C Notes," a semiannual 2-star where prizes are awarded in $100 bills, was held on Nov. 4, 2006. The event awarded over $1200 in cash in addition to tournament shirts and prizes and drew entries from five states; Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Missouri. Randy & Kelly Kendle and Jacob Hamilton from St. Peters, Mo. were the long distance travelers.

The one-day and lots-of-play event was divided into six giant RR groups with each group winner pocketing $100 except in the top "A" group, where the winner took home three fat C Notes. In addition to the first-place awards, cash and other prizes were distributed through 4th place in each of the six groups. Participants also received coupons for some free treats at the snack bar.

Entries were limited to 60 players and with one no show (car accident) all the groups were filled with ten players except the "A" group, which had nine.

The Dayton Lohrey Recreation Center again hosted the tourney, where play was held on 12 Butterfly Tables in the gymnasium and multipurpose room. And as always thanks to Butterfly for its sponsorship. Thanks also to Al Grambo, our referee/umpire, and to Brad Blasingame, our photographer, who provided nice action shots of the players.

In Group A, Joseph Cochran (South Bend) prevailed over Arjun Shankaren (Louisville) in a tight five-game final match. Down 2-1 in games, Cochran swept the last two games at 6 and 2. Both players finished at 8-1, with Cochran winning the head-to-head tie-breaker and three C Notes. Shankaren pocketed a C note and a half. Cochran had earlier dropped a four-game match to Bob Powell (Columbus) whose lefty forehand top-side loops and hard rubber backhand hits found their mark more often than not. Powell however had less fortune against Nick Snider (Cincinnati), when up 2-0, dropped the last three including a 13-11 in the 4th. Snider finished third with the steady Ravi Baburri (Columbus) 4th.

Only two players had perfect scores. Adebisdesiyani (Northern Kentucky) 9-0 in Group C and Xiaoqu Ou (Lexington) 9-0 in Group F.

Group A: 1st Joseph Cochran; 2nd Arjun Shankaren; 3rd Nicholas Snider.

Group B: 1st Frank Aron; 2nd Keith Brewster.

Group C: 1st Ade Adesiyan; 2nd Jason McAlister.

Group D: 1st Daren Tang; 2nd Stephen Creel.

Group E: 1st Ikaika Tadaki; 2nd Tom Leslie.

Group F: 1st Xiaoqu Ou; 2nd Sam Phillips.
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New Jersey December Open
Westfield, NJ • Dec. 9-10, 2006
Open – Final: David Zhuang d. Shawn Embleton, 3,6,2,5; SF: Zhuang d. Paul David, 6,6,8,6; Embleton d. Patrick Mualem, 9,11,-2,7.
U2300: Wally Green d. Judy Hugh, 9,8,-6,3.
U1850: Samuel Russel d. Brian McKnight, -10,12,9.

Jan. 27-28, 2007
Westfield, NJ
U1000: Steplianie Santiago d. Crystal Torres, 10,8.6-11.17,7,9.
U1600: John Pristas d. Hualing Zhong, 7,5.2.8,-11,10,-11,9.
U1400: Asif Hussain d. Michael Johnson. 5,8.8.
U1750: Brian Mcknight d. Quang Chia. 6,9.6.
U2000: Abbas Jumkhawal d. Emile Goldstein. 4.-
U2150: Philippe Dassonval d. Hing Wong. 4,6,7.
U2300: Patrick Mualem d. Lim Chui. 8.5.10.

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Brooklyn BTTC Open
Brooklyn, NY • Jan. 14, 2007
Open – Final: Gao Yan d. Shao Yu, 3-0; SF: Gao d. Paul David, 3-2; Shao d. Nison Aronov, 3-1; QF: Gao d. Tahl Leibovitz, 3-1; Aronov d. De Tran, 3-1; Musa d. Yakshayeh Molshen, 3-2; SF: Henry d. Molshen Javaheri, 3-1; Panich d. Waine Gaskin, 3-0.

Brooklyn BTTC Open
Brooklyn, NY • Dec. 10, 2006
Open – Final: Gao Yan d. Shao Yu, 3-0; SF: Gao d. Andianda Musa 3-2; Shao d. Nison Aronov, 3-1; QF: Gao d. Tahl Leibovitz 3-2; Aronov d. De Tran 3-1; Musa d. Yakshayeh Molshen 3-1; Shao d. Michael Henry 3-0.
U2300 - Final: Sveta Panich d. Michael Henry 3-0; 3-4: Waine Gaskin d. Javahery Molshen 3-2; SF: Henry d. Molshen Javaheri, 3-1; Panich d. Waine Gaskin, 3-0.

Indianapolis Fall Giant RR & 2-Man Teams
Indianapolis, IN • Oct. 28-29, 2006
Over 1800 Class A: 1" Nicholas Snider; 2'd Robert Luo; 3'd Ivan Popov.
Over 1800 Class B: 1' Jeremiah Kolb; 2'd David Creel.
Under 1850 Class C: 1' Cameron Luo; 2'd Ping Poulsen.
Under 1850 Class D: 1' Ikuaiku Tadaki; 2'd Samuel Phillips.
Class B Teams: 1' David Creel & Stephen Creel; 2' Joe Shumaker & Jeff Smart.

Pensacola Winter Open
Pensacola, FL • Dec. 2, 2006
Open – 1-2 (tie): Bob Bollow & Wiley Leparello; 3' Stanley Stephens; 4' Keith Peterman.
Class A: 1' Herb Bennett; 2' Joey Mozur; 3' David Diep.
Class B: 1' Othel Tucker; 2' Garfield Adams; 3' Marc Bran.
Class C: 1' McKinley Toombs; 2' Kirby Peacock; 3' Arlys Silva.

DFW Fall Open
Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX • Nov. 11, 2006
Open Class A: 1' Ludovic Gombo; 2' Winfred Addy.
Class B: 1' Chi Thi; 2' Justin Aten.
Class C: 1' Kai Ko; 2' Serena Kong.
Class D: 1' Zhennin Song; 2' Hakim Dembri.
Class E: 1' Connie Chen; 2' Andrew Khor.
Class F: 1' Judy Yang; 2' Aston Khor.
U2250: 1' Winfred Addy; 2' Heather Wang.
U1900: 1' Sinhsuy Tongkhuya; 2' Sammy Hanna.
U1700: 1' Kai Ko; 2' Edison Dy.
U1500: 1' Andrew Che; 2' Zhennin Song.
U1300: 1' Carl Khor; 2' Andrew Khor.
U1100: 1' Andrew; 2' Austin Elston.
Under 20: 1' Timothy Wang; 2' Chance Friend.
Under 13: 1' Andrew He Chen; 2' Andrew Khor.
Maryland Circuit
Eldersburg, MD • Dec. 2-3, 2006
Open: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Mohamed Kamara.
Over 40: 1st Julian Waters; 2nd Mark Davis.
U1800: 1st Phil VanDusen; 2nd Thomas Lo.
U1700: 1st Yvonne Kronlage; 2nd Gary McConne.
U1500: 1st Bill VanWright; 2nd Barbara Bigood.
U1100: 1st Elliott Hamilton; 2nd Kevin Murphy.
U3600 Doubles: 1st Julian Waters/Yvonne Kronlage; 2nd Dave Jarrin/Chris Puls.
U2800 Doubles: 1st Bill VanWright/Gary McConne; 2nd Calvin Lo/Thomas Lo.

South Bend Open Giant RR
South Bend, IN • Jan. 6-7, 2006
Class A: 1st A.J. Brewer, 6-0; 2nd Dan Seemiller Jr., 5-1.
Class B: 1st Arturo Stanekwicz, 7-0; 2nd Gang Li, 6-1; 3rd Stephen Clyde, 5-2.
Class C: 1st Darren Tang, 9-0; 2nd Philip Kolb, 7-2; 3rd Scott Harris, 5-4.
Class D: 1st Erwin Reed, 8-1; 2nd Wayne Liu, 7-2; 3rd Dan Kim, 6-3.
Class E: 1st Mike Carter, 8-1; 2nd Austin Putt, 8-1; 3rd Matt Franken, 7-2.

Most Wins, Most Matches
By Larry Hodges
The record for most USATT tournament matches (singles only) played in a year had been set by Julian Waters with 349 in 2002. Julian topped that in 2006 with 397 — but had to settle for second place as Phil VanDusen absolutely shattered the record with a mind-boggling 638 matches in 2006. 638??? That record should outlast DiMaggio’s 56-game hitting streak and Cal Ripken’s 2630 consecutive games played. For the year, Phil finished with a 318-320 match record while playing in 40 (!) tournaments.

Julian had held the record for most wins in a year with 285 in 2002. He broke that record with 315 this year (going 315-82), and would have held it except that Phil played in the Killerspin Holiday Open on Dec. 28-30, where he went 8-15 to finish with a 318-320 record for the year! It stopped Julian’s string of four straight years with the most wins. Julian also had the most total matches in 2002 and 2003, and second most the last three years. When you get to the most wins and total matches for the past five and ten years, Julian runs away from the field, with nearly double the number of wins over the past five years as his nearest competitor, AJ Brewer (784), and over double everyone else’s. (If you look to your left, you’ll see the Maryland Circuits, with Julian all over the place.)
Freddie Gabriel and Zheng Jiaqi of the California Bay Area were this year’s Men’s and Women’s champions. Parkrose High School, three miles from the Portland Airport, was home to a shocked crowd which saw Freddie’s 4-0 victory in the final over a favored Mark Hazinski of Texas Wesleyan University. All four games were hangers, but it was Freddie who was making the fast loop winners at the end of every game.

Prior to this Men’s match Freddie told me he felt he had about a 25% chance and he would give it all he had. In the 56-player draw he defeated Jason Shim 4-2 in the quarters and Trevor Runyon 4-1 in the semis. Then Mark 4-0 in the final? Go figure.

Zheng by contrast lost a match in her qualifying round robin to Ines Perhoc of Texas Wesleyan, 9-6,8-10, but still qualified for the quarters where she faced Jackie Lee. Down 2-1 in games, Zheng pulled it out 17-15 in the fifth game. In the semis it wasn’t any easier, defeating Crystal Huang, 11-9 in the fifth.

Tawny Bahn, on the other half, defeated Whitney Ping 7,8-5,8,8 (whew!) in the quarters and Ines Perhoc 7-11,7,8 in the semis. Zheng then dispatched Tawny 3-1 for the Women’s title. Therefore, none of the women came out undefeated.

As we go all the way down to under 300 events, there were quite a crowd of first-time tournament players as well as other “novices” and parents. They provided us with a raucous and amazed crowd for our semis and finals, especially surprised at how many fabulous women players we had.

In Open Doubles, #1 seeded Hazinski and his Texas Wesleyan partner Courtney Roberts defeated Gabriel and Avishy Schmidt, 3-2.

As many of us know, doubles is a lot different than singles. In the mixed, Tuan Le and Crystal Huang from SoCal defeated three very strong teams in succession for the title: Schmidt-Banh 3-2, Hazinski-Perhoc 3-2, Cal University’s Pump-up Qasim Aiz (2378) as well as Raghu Nadmichettu (2344). Junior players also made a strong showing, led by Peter Li (2286) and Anamari Sahu (2230).

The round robins saw their share of excitement. In Group 1, while Xiao took the group easily, Bernard Eballar (1848) pulled off a surprising 3-1 victory over Stephen Hochman (2101). While both players had difficulty returning serve, Eballar was able to come out on top in the rallies. In Group 2, Huang likewise breezed through the group without dropping a game. In the match for second place in the group, Barbara Wei (2123) took a quick 3-0 victory over Joseph Wang (2167) to take a place in the quarterfinals. The third round robin proceeded without much drama, with the top two seeds Aziz and Sahu advancing as expected. In the final group, Peter Li advanced first in the group over Nadmichettu, but both were able to advance.

In the quarterfinals, the top two seeds, Xiao and Huang, both advanced 3-0. However, Sahu surprisingly triumphed 3-0 over Li, and Nadmichettu surprised Aziz, 3-1. Aziz played a bit tight during the match due to a recent change in the brands of rubber he is using. The semifinals once again saw the two seeds cruising, Xiao over Sahu 4-0, Huang over Nadmichettu 4-0, setting up an interesting final. The final was closely contested and very tight, with a couple games going to deuce, but in the end Huang was able to pull away from 2-2 in games to a 4-2 victory, winning the last two games 11-8. Congratulations to all who participated in a hard-fought tournament.

**MDTTC Butterfly Winter Open**

*Gaithersburg, MD • Jan. 20-21, 2007 • By Wei Xiao*

The 2007 MDTTC Butterfly Winter Open event was highly contested between a number of players, including the top two seeds, Han Xiao (2588) and Huang Bang Chao (2467), but as high as 2665 just last year. Other players with title hopes included the always pumped up Qasim Aziz (2378) as well as Raghu Nadmichettu (2344). Junior players also made a strong showing, led by Peter Li (2286) and Anamari Sahu (2230).

The round robins saw their share of excitement. In Group 1, while Xiao took the group easily, Bernard Eballar (1848) pulled off a surprising 3-1 victory over Stephen Hochman (2101). While both players had difficulty returning serve, Eballar was able to come out on top in the rallies. In Group 2, Huang likewise breezed through the group without dropping a game. In the match for second place in the group, Barbara Wei (2123) took a quick 3-0 victory over Joseph Wang (2167) to take a place in the quarterfinals. The third round robin proceeded without much drama, with the top two seeds Aziz and Sahu advancing as expected. In the final group, Peter Li advanced first in the group over Nadmichettu, but both were able to advance.

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These kids were great from start to finish in a counter-smashing battle won 12-10 in the fifth by Teddy. As each point-winner's “YO!!” pierced the air, the crowd was on its feet over and over, totally not caring or knowing who would come out on top. Austin and Teddy will certainly be challenging soon to be on their respective Olympic teams.

Thanks go to Stiga who assisted us once again with tables which make the tournament what it is. After completion, the tables are cycled into some of our schools each year as part of the BIG WHACK program. Also, thanks to our perennial partner, Paddle Palace, and to Parkrose High School.

Men’s Singles – Final: Freddie Gabriel d. Mark Hazinski, 9,10,8,10;
SF: Gabriel d. Trevor Runyan, 4,7,-7,3,7, Hazinski d. Tuan Le, 7,8,6,8;
QF: Gabriel d. Jason Shim, 8,-8,9,-8, Hazinski d. Roel Aguanta, 7,10,6,4;
Le d. Runyan d. Avishy Schmidt, 9,5,-9,6,4; Guan Gu, 9,10,8,9.

Women’s Singles – Final: Zheng Jiaqi d. Tawny Banh, 7,-8,9,6;
SF: Zheng d. Crystal Huang, 4,10,-4,-3,9; Banh d. Ines Perhoc, -11,7,3,8;
QF: Zheng d. Jackie Lee, 4,-9,9,15; Banh d. Whitney Ping, 7,8,-5,8,8;
Huang d. Simone Yang, 5,4,-6,7; Perhoc d. Atia Fong, 9,7,6.

Open Doubles – Final: Mark Hazinski/Courtney Roberts d. Freddie Gabriel/Avishy Schmidt, 7,-9,8,-10,8;
SF: Hazinski/Roberts d. Simone Yang/Whitney Ping, 8,7,7;
Mixed Doubles – Final: Tuan Le/Crystal Huang d. Freddie Gabriel/Jackie Lee, 7,-9,9,-9,5;
SF: Le/Huang d. Mark Hazinski/Ines Perhoc, 10,-8,9,8;
QF: Gabriel/Le d. Trevor Runyan/Whitney Ping, 7,9,12.
U2500: 1st Crystal Huang; 2nd Tawny Banh; 3rd Jackie Lee; 4th Tuan Le.
U2300 – Final: Danny Ho d. Jason Shim, 7,-7,-8,8,8;
SF: Ho d. Vladimir Altman, 3,14,4,6; Shim d. James Theriault, 9,7,7.
U2100 – Final: Renjith Retnamma d. John Ochsner, 8,-5,11,4;
SF: Retnamma d. Karl Augustad, 8,5,11,4; Ochsner d. Viktor Sidorov, 5,10,7,5.
U1900: Renjith Retnamma d. Karl Augustad, 9,7,-10,5.
U1700: WC Wang d. Joe Kay, -6,7,-5,9,4.
U1550: Raymond Xu d. Dave Edwards, 8,-7,9,6.
U1250: John Chow d. Jeff Lam, 9,9,7.
U1100: Andrew Delaney d. Jeff Lam, 5,9,-5,4.
U900: Mimi Ho d. Tedre Tam, -11,-6,6,8.
U700: Tedre Tam d. Sin Chee Fu, -7,-8,6,1.
U500: Johnny Ochsner d. Nancy Reynolds, 9,7,5.
U300: Andy Le d. Aaron Louie, 4,5,9.
Over 40 – Final: Tuan Le d. Rick Livermore, 5,2,3;
SF: Le d. Gary Ruderman, 9,9,9; Livermore d. Vladimir Altman, 9,7,7,8.

Over 50 – Final: Alex Sumeri d. Cai Xin Huang, 8,-10,9,11;
SF: Sumeri d. Phil Goldsmith, 3,-8,7,8; Huang d. Frank Correa, 9,12,9.
College – Final: Jackie Lee d. Eldis Presley, 3,9,7;
SF: Lee d. Tina Chen, 7,8,6; Presley d. Courtney Roberts, 10,9,7,9.
High School – Final: Trevor Runyan d. Quan Gu, 7,6,9;
Under 16 – Final: Rui Cong Chen d. Austin Preiss, 7,9,7;
Under 13 – Final: Teddy Wu d. Austin Preiss, -10,7,8,-9,11;
U4000 Doubles: Jason Shim/Andre Kalajdiz, Scott Preiss/Austin Preiss, -8,4,9,8.
U3200 Doubles: WC Wang/Joe Kay d. Thomas Nguyen/Raymond Xu, 1,7,10.
U2400 Doubles: Quoc Shivagie/Mimi Ho d. Dave Edwards/Manuel Armendariz, 7,9,7.

Photo by Alexander Berenbein ©2006

Photo by Alexander Berenbein ©2006

Women’s Finalist
Tawny Banh

Women’s Finalist
Crystal Huang

Women’s Semifinalist
Ines Perhoc

Women’s Semifinalist
Crystal Huang

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They came, they saw, and they conquered!

Veni, Vidi, Vici!

(They came, they saw, and they conquered!) You, you came, you saw, and you conquered. Who came? What was seen? What was conquered? Read on to find out what happened at the annual Chicago Mayor’s Sports Festival held on December 28-30, 2006 at the McCormick Center in beautiful Chicago.

Over 80,000 sports enthusiasts, supported by 15 major corporate sponsors, enjoyed watching and competing in 25 different sports during the three-day event with Table Tennis stealing the show! Killerspin’s passion for Table Tennis and desire to hold a first-class ESPN television competition impressed the Chicago Mayor’s Office for Special Events. The Special Events Staff worked hard to facilitate the construction of a TV arena in the concourse of Hall B. The concourse is in the front of the entire Festival; the very first sport visitors observed was Table Tennis!

The featured Table Tennis event of the Festival was the SPINvitational single elimination tournament held on Friday, December 29. Nine invited international champions from nine different countries vied for nearly $50,000 in prize money. In the first quarterfinal Sharath Kamal of India, the 2006 Commonwealth Singles Champion, fought hard and hit two-winged winners against Kalinikos Kreanga of Greece before losing 3-0 against the more powerful Kreanga. Kamal’s recent international wins have him on the fast track to a top 100 ranking in the world.

Aleksandar Karakasevic of Serbia used his incredible soft touch and big backhand kills to defeat Koji Matsushita of Japan, 3-1. Karakasevic looks to have improved his physical conditioning and has moved up to #32 in the World. Koji’s defensive magic thrilled the crowd and will make great television when it shows on ESPN. Jean-Michel Saive of Belgium matched amazing shot after amazing shot with Jorgen Persson of Sweden before outlasting him, 3-2.

One never gets tired of watching Persson’s amazing away from the backhand kill; however, one can get worn out witnessing the hard-work ethic of Saive.

The last quarterfinal match pitted two long-time friends and competitors, Zoran Primorac of Croatia, and Ilija Lupulescu from the U.S. Primorac beat Lupulescu 3-1 in a competitive match that surprised the on-lookers that know table tennis – this was really a competition!

The afternoon session began with Biba winning the women’s event over Mimi Bosika, 3-1 with many oohs and ahhhs coming from the crowd. Not many had ever seen real table tennis played. It was fun to watch the spectators nod to each other after a hard-fought point.

In the first semifinal, Kreanga out-muscled Saive, 3-2. Each player hit harder and harder shots until Kreanga came out with an even stronger shot to take the crucial points and the match. Primorac’s 3-1 win over Karakasevic in the second semifinal was a lesson in keeping the ball on the table and making the right decisions as to when to attack and hit winners and when to block. Primorac has the complete game with some of the most compact yet effective strokes.

A rematch of Ethan Chu vs. CJ Brewer (ages 8 and 9), started the evening session. Ethan narrowly defeated CJ last month in Las Vegas at the U.S. Nationals, where he came back from down 0-2 and 5-10 match point in the third to win five. Here, in Chicago, Ethan seemed very comfortable as he downed CJ, 3-1. As one can imagine, the crowd was really into it; they were shaking their heads in disbelief at these athletes who can barely see over the table and yet are hitting and looping winners. CJ competed valiantly, but later admitted that he was more nervous than his opponent, which contributed to his losing. Ethan later played exhibition games with Persson and Lupulesku, again to the delight of the spectators.

Now for the final, it was the power of Kreanga against the control of Primorac. Who will win? Or who will conquer the other? Kreanga exhibited more energy than he did in his prior two matches of the day and the question of this match was, could he keep it up long enough to defeat Primorac? Yes, he could and did with some spectacular shot-making that the TV cameras captured. The extremely competitive match actually turned in Kreanga’s favor when Primorac strained his back during the start of the fifth game, giving the edge to Kreanga. Many on-lookers were convinced that Kreanga would have won no matter what Primorac did – he was that hot!

This Killerspin Holiday Open also included many events for all with collegiate team championships and recreational youth championships on Thursday. The University of Kentucky took first place and won a new Killerspin Table Tennis Table and Rock Valley College placed second in the three-person team event. Killerspin also provided eight new tables for visitors to use, located in the Chicago Mayor’s Interactive Section of the Festival.

Over 250 players entered the tournament with 234 entering the 14 U.S.ATT sanctioned events and the 41-point handicap competition. Going back to the article theme, Veni, Vidi, Vici, we see that 21 of the 32 players winning first or second place were not born in the U.S. – so the internationals conquered. The team from Puerto Rico came and conquered by earning first five places and one second! The juniors excelled with a combined six firsts and seconds (and benefited by paying $100 adult entry fee). The women were a bit dominant with two firsts and three seconds. These results demonstrate some of the strengths of U.S. Table Tennis – the international flavor of our sport and the age and gender equality that can be achieved.

One of the highlights of the Open Singles Event (a separate event from the SPINvitational) was the very competitive quarterfinal match between Saive and Adam Hugh. Hugh won the first game 13-11 before narrowly losing the next three. The semifinal match between Thomas Keinath and Karakasevic included a major momentum swing. Keinath won just eight points total in losing the first two games before closing out the match with wins at 6, 5, and 4. Saive used his experience (five-time Olympian) and tactics to win the final over Keinath 3-1 and take home $3000.

Other notable highlights were: 19-year-old Hector Berrios of Puerto Rico defeating Sasa Drinica in the final of Under 2500; Keinath winning the 41-point handicap event after spotting nearly all of his opponents a head start of 36 points and facing eight match points; Carelyn Cordero of Puerto Rico, rated 1482, winning the 1500 and 1600 events and taking second in the 1800 event; and the very enjoyable parent/child recreational doubles event won by tiebreak in a three-way tie by Nicholas Silas and his father, Dean!

Kagan Lee, who just earned his National Umpire credential, did a great job refereeing – thank you! Also thanks to the 30+ volunteers that built the TV arena and assembled 45 new tables out of the box and a special thanks to the three Ohio State University students who drove up to help our volunteer team.

One last reference to our theme, Veni, Vidi, Vici: Table Tennis came to Chicago, spectators saw, and Table Tennis conquered Chicago! What fun it was!

SPINvitational Results

Final: Kalinikos Kreanga (GRE) d. Zoran Primorac (HRV), 3-2; SF: Keinath d. Jean-Michel Saive (BEL), 3-2; Primorac d. Aleksandar Karakasevic (SRB), 3-1; QF: Kreanga d. Sharath Kamal (IND), 3-2; Saive d. Jorgen Persson (SWE), 3-2; Primorac d. Ilija Lupulescu (USA), 3-1; Karakasevic d. Koji Matsushita (JPN), 3-1.

Women: Biba d. Mimi Bosika, 3-1.

Juniors: Ethan Chu d. CJ Beever, 3-1.

Killerspin Chicago Holiday Open Results

Open Final: Jean-Michael Saive (BEL).d. Thomas Keinath (GER), 8-10, 5-8; SF: Saive d. Sharath Kamal (IND), 8-6, 5-12; Keinath d. Aleksandar Karakasevic (SRB), 1-7, 6-5, 4; QF: Saive d. Adam Hugh (USA), 13-6, 8-6; Kamal d. Mark Hazinski (USA), 8-4, 6; Keinath d. Yin Wang (CHN), 7-5, 3; Karakasevic d. Ilija Lupulescu (USA), 8-3, 6, 12; 12th: Hugh d. Justin Yao (USA), 2-9, 5; Hazinski d. Don Hamilton (USA), 7-9, 4; Kamal d. Biba (USA), 6-10, 8; Keinath d. Barry Dattel (USA), 4-10, 10-5; Wang d. Sasa Drinica (USA), 8-9, 8-9; Lupulescu d. Hector Berrios (PUR), 9-9, 6, Saive-bye; Karakasevic-bye.

U2500: 1st Hector Berrios; 2nd Sasa Drinica.

U2400: 1st Barry Dattel; 2nd Biba.

U2200: 1st Spencer Lam; 2nd Ivan Popov.

U2100: 1st Oluwale Ayangade; 2nd Leon Li.
Scenes from the SPINVitational and the Killerspin Chicago Holiday Open

Photos by Gerry Chua ©2006
"Think Big" - The Importance of Strong Footwork: The Footwork of Ryu Seung Min

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

2004 Olympic Gold Medalist Ryu Seung Min from Korea has been called the fastest man in table tennis. It's hard to argue with that once you've seen his court coverage. In the past we have analyzed his "turning" footwork, the one he uses to run around a backhand to take a forhand. In this article, we'll focus on some general footwork issues and look at Ryu's cross-step.

Footwork is such an important technique in Table Tennis that its impact is felt on practically every shot. Whether it is lateral or forward and backward, it is the determining factor in whether we can get off a good shot or are forced to scramble just to get the ball over the net. The most powerful, best grooved, strongest, most fluid strokes will be useless unless you can get your body into the correct position to apply them. With that understanding, we need to look at the two main components that make up good footwork: speed and balance. Neither does any good without the other.

The lack of footwork is the most clearly visible distinguishing mark between strong players and those not so strong. Good footwork depends on a basic body position, which must be low, with bent knees throughout the point, not only while receiving. A low, wide stance increases your reach from any given position and allows a fast take-off to a new one. It is tiring to stand and move like that, and many players seem unwilling to do it. But, guys, it's a sport! Your muscles are supposed to be burning after playing.

Next comes the sequence of steps itself. Here, we run into several limitations, some physical, some mental. One of the physical ones can be lack of space, which often leads players to develop bad habits. Even when playing at a club, players rarely have the benefit of sufficient space around each table to allow them to step out as far as they need without interfering with the players on the table next to them. That's a tough limitation to overcome, but at least we need to be aware of it. A correctly performed "turn" shot, for example, can demand that your outside foot steps as far as five feet outside of the side line. That's deep in the next table's territory in most clubs. When space doesn't allow us to do it right, we need to recognize how much that limits us and try to overcome it whenever possible. Interestingly, when tennis players first come to play table tennis, they always have great court coverage from the get go. When space doesn't allow us to do it right, we need to recognize how much that limits us and try to overcome it whenever possible. Interestingly, when tennis players first come to play table tennis, they always have great court coverage from the get go. Due to their habits, they think BIG. You have to do so as well. Your steps have to be big to cover as much distance as possible. That allows for extra time on both ends - before taking off, which allows you to assess the ball a little longer, and after landing, which allows you to regain your balance.

So: Don't rush, but step big!

The second factor - balance - is derived from good timing and technique. If you start your step at the correct time, you will have a precise notion of where you need to go to. Start too early and you're guessing. If you made a large enough step, you're now either in position to take a balanced shot, or, as in the case illustrated here - the cross-step - you already have performed your shot and now need to stabilize your balance and prepare for the next one. Fast footwork is not only about running fast, it's also about stopping fast.

We chose this sequence of pictures because it shows Ryu making up for incorrect anticipation with his footwork. It starts with Ryu recovering from his serve (1). He sees Chihan ready to flick the ball and anticipates a shot to his backhand. He commits to step around (2-3), but Chihan flicks down the line. Ryu recognizes it, but he has to stop his momentum with his left foot first. His whole weight transfers to the right leg as he pushes off for a big cross step (4-8), his left leg crosses in front, spanning about 7 or 8 feet to land past the extension of the right edge of the table. He performs the stroke in mid-air and contacts
the ball just before he lands with his left foot (8). Throughout the stroke his eyes remain trained on the ball. As soon as he lands he regains his balance, stays low and prepares his next loop (9-12).

To gain confidence that you actually can reach a ball this wide, try the following exercise: Set two tables up next to each other. Play a ball to a practice partner around the middle of the two tables and have him block it to your backhand. Run around and play a medium speed forehand to him. He now blocks it wide to your far forehand corner on the second table. First, try to just touch the ball and swat it down. Initially you'll be tempted to say “no way!” Then you'll see that you can actually touch it, and fifteen minutes later you might get off some sort of shot. Then go back to one table and your attitude will be: “How could I ever not get to that ball??”
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The ITTF decided in 2006 that any new authorized glues must not contain volatile organic solvents (VOS). In addition, adhesives containing volatile organic solvents shall not be used at the playing venue starting September 1, 2006, and not used at all starting September 1, 2007.

The reason for the rule changes were the harmful effects of inhalation, contact, and ingestion, plus the long-term adverse effects to the environment, and safety laws that regulate composition, packaging, transport, and sale of organic solvents.

As we got closer to 2007, the manufacturers hadn't solved the challenge to create a non-VOS glue, and thus the deadline was delayed to 2008. Thanks to Berenger International (with assistance from two companies that specialize in alternative solutions to hydrocarbons, a doctor in chemistry, and a research lab), the future has arrived:

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Sean Develops our ads for USATT Magazine and content for our website and email newsletters. Finds promising players for us to sponsor. Helps customers choose the right product via the ‘Ask Sean’ email link on our website (www.ping-pong.com/contact.php). Five-time U.S. Men’s Singles Champion, Sean has played with STIGA and Butterfly equipment, twice representing the U.S. at the Olympics.

Jens Works on marketing and sponsorship. As a top German player, Jens knows andro and DONIC products extremely well.

Lyne Co-owner of the company and head of our accounting department. A former Canadian National Team member, Lyne knows the BANDA line inside and out.

David Currently working on a major redesign of our website. He has played for over 20 years at the regional level, has extensive experience as a club officer and as a director of numerous tournaments at the regional and national level, and is the developer of the STIGA World Ratings (www.stigaworldratings.com).

Michelle The newest member of our team, Michelle brings her graphical artistry to support our marketing efforts.

Clubs/Dealer Program Manager Jack Kabralian is really a jack-of-all-trades! If your club is looking for a new set of tables or club uniforms, he is your man. If you have any robot questions or needs, he has your answer. If you would like to join our Dealer Program, he can assist you. As an active player, Jack has played with more of our products than any other team member and can help steer you in the right direction.

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