



Table	
	Talk

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From the Editor's desk

THIS IS IT - THE FIRST NZTTA NEWSLETTER.

This is YOUR publication to share your news and views with table tennis players and administrators throughout the country. The success, or otherwise, will depend on each one of us making contributions and subscribing to it.

So please subscribe to TABLE TALK. Tell your friends to subscribe to TABLE TALK. Give us your views of TABLE TALK and above all, write for TABLE TALK.

TABLE TALK needs YOU, so if you have a good idea, share it by putting pen to paper now and forward it to the Editor, C/- NZTTA, P O Box 867, Wellington. The next issue will be published after the New Zealand championships.

This first issue is a complimentary copy. Future issues will be on a subscription basis of 4 copies per year at a charge of \$10 per year for four issues (includes postage and GST.) A subscription form is enclosed. Simply complete it and send it, together with your remittance of \$10 to NZTTA, P O Box 867, Wellington.

Peter Hirst

contributions welcome

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BRING BACK THE SPECTACLE

For many years now table tennis has been governed by traditions that may be inhibiting the visual impact. How often do you see people or, dare I say, do you consider playing in scruffy gear, dirty, worn out shoes with a bat that is still damp from when it came out of the ark?

Didn't you know that Noah was an interclub player?

How about playing in white using yellow balls. Does tennis, badminton, squash etc have a better image? If you think the answer is yes then is it because of the much smarter clothing? Stand up and be counted all you people who are prepared to play in tracksuit pants. My opinion is that tracksuits and, in particular, pants cheapen the image of table tennis. We get only what we put up with.

In my early months in New Zealand I was promoting the view that at tournaments twiddle boards should be used by the umpires so that spectators could know the score on all the tables rather than just trying to hear the nearest mumbler to you. All credit to the Auckland Association - they made the effort, got the scoring machines and improved the image of table tennis at the same time. The next step is to get numbers for the backs of players so everyone knows who they are watching and how well they are doing.

One view shared by many in NZTTA to help create a better image is the use of 'soft balls.' Still of 3-star quality but a softer and lighter mix of celluloid, the overall result is that the ball travels slower through the air, allowing the receiver more time to work out what is going on. In laymen's terms that means longer rallies. If I were the dictator of NZ table tennis one of the first things I would would be to have normal balls used only at the major Open tournaments. Every other formn and level of table tennis would use the softer version.

LET'S GET THE RALLIES BACK!!!!

P A Hirst

SELECTION POLICY

How are New Zealand teams picked? What is the logic applied? How is one person more acceptable than another?

As a selection panel we are charged with the responsibility of deciding who are the best players to represent New Zealand. We try to view as an umpire without emotion. Imagine an interclub match between players A and B in the third game. A at 20-19 gets a net and edge to win 21-19. Player A feels that it was a great match and result. Player B thinks that A was 'tinny' and feels disappointed. The umpire, however, says 'match to A.' So in the process of selection - someone has to feel let down but a team still has to be selected.

First, we look at the Rating Lists which are compiled from the Nationals, North and South Island championships, Top 12's and each region's Rating tournament. Players wishing to be considered for New Zealand should make these events a priority if they feel that to represent their country is within their grasp. We have to look at who a player has beaten in the Rating events against what styles etc. We have to decide on who we think can compete against foreign opposition. If someone comes out definitely above the rest, they go in. If, after that there is a pool of players of similar standard, we look for who has the greater potential in the way that they play, such as, do they do the positive things with the ball or just return the opponent's strokes? Can they put an opponent under pressure? In other words some styles and personality types are better suited towards international table tennis than others. Winning on the home circuit does not guarantee success against foreign opposition.

Often in the past I have said that up to 70% of what is done at international level can be put under the heading of mental toughness. The ability to do the right things when the pressure is on falls high on the priority list for potential international players.

An overall aim to develop the whole of table tennis in New Zealand is a high priority. This can on occasions mean that experience gaining places can be made available to persons displaying the qualities conducive to international table tennis. This becomes an investment for the future. Players need to experience international events to have any chance of developing or doing well.

Last but not least, New Zealand reps need to be worthy of the people they represent. They must act as ambassadors for their country both on and off the table. They need to be co-operative, sociable and without hostility. The experienced members need to help the inexperienced and in so doing compliment each other.

Peter Hirst, Convenor of Selectors.

SOUTH ISLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

A man called Flint (Special Agent) has done it again! Ran the South Island champs, I mean. June 11,12,13 saw the Canterbury Association hosting the '88 South Island champs which turned out to be the 50th open tournament run in Christchurch. The first was in 1938. Frank O'Gorman has played in just about all 50. In 1938 it was the first that North Island players ventured over Cook Strait and played in a South Island open tournament - and took five titles. In 1988 the NI supplied 33 seeds and the SI 34. Ten titles went north and six stayed in the South Island.

The Emmy award at the senior presentation had to go to a mouse named Duffy - but the screams were not all of delight.

The brief results were:

Women: Open singles Pam Shadbolt, 035 Lynley Barker, U21 Jenny Lawn, U19 Tracey Lewis, U17 Melanie Low, U15 Luana Graham, U13 Tracey Phillips.

Men: Open singles Alan Pedley, 055 John Lelliott, 045 Denis Kalin, 035 Les Stewart, U21 Darren Sears, U19 Darren Sears, U17 Darren Sears, U15 Paul Bowman, U13 Shane Laugesen.

9TH ASIAN SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

These championships were hosted by Japan in Niigata City where the hospitality and organisation were fantastic. The organising committee had a budget of \$NZ4m to host the 26 countries with Niigata City being one of the main contributors. Television cameras were everywhere with coverage of more than one hour's air time daily. The philosophy of the Asian championships is one of friendship. Palestine (PLO) was recognised as a participating nation. Perhaps the only scar was the walkout of the North Korean team after the team was refused admission to a political rally. Maybe, it is naive to feel that sport can remain separate from politics!

It's extremely difficult to move up the ladder when seedings are compiled from only two events. Our men's team was drawn with China, China Taipei, Hong Kong and Bangladesh. The winner from each group played-off for the first four places, the second placegetters for 5-8, thirds for 9-12, fourths for 13-16, fifths for 17 down. New Zealand was unlucky to lose to Hong Kong 5-4 in the first contest and then to China and China Taipei. Our win was an easy one against Bangladesh. China went on to win overall. Taipei, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Bangladesh all won their second stage contests proving that we were in the strongest group by far. A comparison could be Australia which gained 8th place. They beat Iran 5-4 whereas we beat Iran 5-0! Overall the men's team gained 13th place and the women 14th.

Overall, New Zealand table tennis should be pleased. We know that we are getting better internationally. Barry Griffiths won 12 teams matches out of 14 and in the men's singles he lost to Juzo Nukazuka, the Japanese champion and No.1, at 18 in the fifth game. Peter Jackson beat Vong Lu Veng of Hong Kong, a Commonwealth champion of not long ago. He lost in the singles to Liu Fuk Man, also of Hong Kong but who turned out to be an import from China, in five games. Alan Pedley lost in five to Zabara Mutahar of the Yemen Arab Republic and Alan Shewan lost to Koji Matsushita of Japan who is a world class chopper ranked 3 in Japan. The girls lost early on. Sarah Sandley and Maxine Goldie both lost 3 straight to Kiyomi Ishida, Japan No. 1 and Tan Ah Tju of Singapore respectively while Sharon Coad lost in four to Espino Luisa of the Phillipines.

VISIT BY FORMER WORLD CHAMPION TO NEW ZEALAND

The projected tour of New Zealand next winter by former Chinese world champion Guo and Czechoslovakian Danny Suchanec will hopefully both go ahead and turn out a resounding success. It wasn't so long ago that there was a regular trail of Swedes, English, Czechs, Chinese, Australians, French and Japanese coming through, but the touring cupboard has been pretty bare in recent years. And with the sport absent from the all-important TV screen (and the last coverage, the world championships three years ago hardly helping any through the robot-like finals, viewers were forced to sit through), it is vital that something both newsworthy and highly watchable occur very soon.

This year should definitely be that. National Director of Coaching, Peter Hirst, rates Guo as the best of the (many) world champions he has seen, recalling his destruction of the legendary Japanese chopper Takashima in paltry single figures in an era when Takashima was desperately difficult to beat. Guo won his world men's singles titles in 1979 and 1981 and Hirst says he was also far and away the best player in the stadium at the 1977 Worlds, where he lost to Kono in one of those finals that people born outside China find impossible to understand. Guo will still obviously be a very fine player when he comes here next year.

Suchanec is one of a number of Czech exiles floating around European competition - he plays in the strong German national league. Biographical details have yet to arrive, but Hirst thinks Suchanec was a Czech national champion (incidentally, did you know that Hirst was once billed as a three-time world champion for a tour of Canada? Peter recalls having his hand repeatedly pumped in the main streets of Canada by local sports lovers keen to touch a world champion).

There has already been some talk over the finer detail of the tour. Some may find this premature, but the fact remains that the projected programme for each match - two best-of-three games with local opposition, a doubles and a one set exhibition - might seem a little thin. Whatever, I'm sure this side of it will be sorted out closer to the event, but a few extras might not go amiss to flesh out the evening. Things like donated bottles of wine for members of the crowd who fancy their chances of returning one of Guo's serves. Having non-table tennis players battling against the spin of top players is both fun and educational - in Dunedin we once got a great TV item on the local news by having local TV sports man Ken Nicholson trying to return the serves of the young Chinese star, Fang Chung Mal. It was hilarious television, but it also showed the general sports fan just how much spin goes on the table tennis ball. And it is the general sports fan that will have to be attracted to make this tour really succeed financially. Ideally, the two tourists could start their tour off with a spectacular exhibition on Sport On One the Saturday afternoon preceding the tour just to show everyone what was in store for them. Or maybe there could be some film available from the preceding Australian leg of the trip? It would make a big difference.

Roy Colbert

THE CONCEPT OF AFFILIATION

YOUR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION - - YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Playing table tennis is a way of life, a recreation and sport for both sexes and all ages, a means of improving an individual's health and the welfare of New Zealand.

But playing table tennis does not just occur. It happens because there has been a structure set up over a long period of time - the New Zealand Table Tennis Association is now aged 54 years - and contributed to by thousands of juniors, seniors, men and women.

Affiliation in table tennis, or any sport, is essential. It is no different to the concept of life we accept as ordinary citizens. The first requirement in any community is the protection of its people; consequently, the first step is the establishment of law and order. We submit to and pay for this control, called government, because it provides the guarantee of personal security, the orderly development of the community and the means of progress.

The table tennis player becomes a member of a club because that step affords the only means of satisfying the desire to play the game whenever the player wants. The player's club affiliates to a local association in order to secure the benefits of organisation and play beyond the narrow limits of its own orbit, and the associations in turn constitute the government - the New Zealand Table Tennis Association, which in turn affiliates to the International Table Tennis Federation.

Just as the table tennis player must find another player before he/she can have a game, so the club must find other clubs before it can promote the competition without which no game can survive. By logical steps the clubs come into the group association to secure common and orderly direction and so, in turn, the associations join forces in a national body and the network is complete.

Affiliation is organisation. Without organisation there would be no competition between club and club, association and association, nation and nation, the standard of play would be poor and the game would languish and degenerate.

Affiliation means the rule of law, for it provides a game with an effective governing body and an active agency to protect the rights, privileges and status of players.

Affiliation provides a powerful safeguard against trade exploitation of the game and its players.

Affiliation means the promotion of a high standard of play in New Zealand through championship meetings, tournaments, competition and participation in World, Commonwealth and Oceania events.

Affiliation confers upon New Zealand players a right of participation in the game at all levels within New Zealand and throughout the world.

WHAT IS THE NZTTA?

The NZTTA is a body comprised of twenty-five associations. Its principal objectives are to foster, control and develop the sport of table tennis in New Zealand. To do this it must abide by the various rules and regulations of international table tennis bodies and the rules of table tennis, and it must seek the assistance of its twenty-five associations in working toward the same overall goal which is the progress of table tennis as a sport and recreation.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THERE WAS NO NZTTA?

- There would be no North Island, South Island or New Zealand championships in any age groups.
- There would be no organisation to handle entry into Oceania, Commonwealth or World Championships.
- There would be no planned overseas tours such as the Australian championships, Asian championships etc.
- New Zealand would not qualify to participate in the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.
- There would be no national body to arbitrate on disputes or to bring to the attention of everyone who wish to play table tennis changes in rules and the like.
- There would be no body which could apply for and receive financial support through The Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport and from agencies such as the New Zealand Sports Foundation.
- There would be no negotiating body to seek sponsorship on a national basis.
- There would be no membership of the International Table Tennis Federation and we would cease to exist.
- National rankings would not exist and no young players with talent would see any future in playing the game.
- There would be no coaching programme or development programme and this would have a catastrophic effect on the expansion of the game which would mean a decline in interest and standards beyond any possible acceptable levels.
- At the club level enthusiasm for the game would suffer because of the general health of the game nationally and at district level.

SURELY, IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE GREAT GAME OF TABLE TENNIS, AFFILIATION TO THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION AND TO THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION IS WORTHWHILE IF IT PRESERVES THE CONTINUANCE OF THE SPORT AND PREVENTS ANY OF THE ABOVE FROM HAPPENING.

DO WE NOT HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THOSE FOLLOWING US HAVE THE SAME, OR BETTER, OPPORTUNITIES AS WE NOW ENJOY!

It has been said from time to time, that people who pay affiliation fees are doing the NZTTA and the local association a favour. In fact, they are investing in the future of the game they love by enabling national organisation and development to continue and to be spread through all levels of activity.

It will never be possible to provide equally for all. There must be some give and take for the benefit of the game. Everybody is part of the family of table tennis and they all have the opportunity to share in some of the benefits.

The NZTTA is involved in tournaments, coaching and development programmes, the establishment of codes of conduct, inter-association competitions and international competitions. It is committed to giving all players the opportunity to reach their full playing potential.

Local association activities include inter-club, tournaments, coaching and development, the encouragement of mid-week and business house competitions and umpiring.

Affiliation fees at national and local level still form the most important source of income to ensure the continued progress and administration of the sport. The fees are used to administer the sport and to provide a base for much of the development.

Table tennis in New Zealand has developed through affiliation and self-help. It's worth continuing the partnership, it's worth expanding it.

The 'What's in it for me' query can so easily be asked by anyone in so many areas of life where little thought is given to the total concept as outlined in this document. It is, to be frank, the easy way out and in our view shows a lack of concern and responsibility towards a great sport which provides so many people with so much enjoyment.

READERS VIEWS

This section of the newsletter is here for the use of readers willing to express their views. Anything and everything will be considered for publication providing it contains constructive information and not just moans.

Send your contribution to the Editor, C/- NZTTA, P O Box 867, Wellington, preferably typed and, please, use only one side of the paper.

THE DUNEDIN SCENE

The Dunedin A grade interclub competition got underway in the first week of April with a few notable absentees and two more than useful gains.

After recapturing some genuine former glory at last year's South Island champs when she knocked over Maxine Goldie, Yvonne Fogarty announced she wouldn't be playing this winter. And veteran Barrie Kendall, who has proved deceptively difficult to beat in Duendin for yonks, also wasn't named in any starting lineups, though like basketball, starting lineups are not always finishing lineups.

Big Darren Forrester, a firm favourite at national championships where he seemed to achieve the impossible by combining the on-table personae of Gary Williams and Adrian Lust, is another who won't be seen locally this winter. And David Pyper, despite reaching tenth ranking in the country for 1987, has indicated the sustained excitement of indoor cricket will hold much of his midweek attention rather than the only occasional excitement of the Dunedin A grade competition. Pyper however will thankfully be consistently available all year for Otago.

Selector Martin Duffy is hopeful new arrival Maurice Burrowes will be available for Otago also. Burrowes is down here from Hamilton as a polytech nursing tutor, and while he is reportedly not looking beyond interclub, Duffy vows he will "work on that". As Duffy has been working on people to change their minds for around 22 seasons now one can only presume he will have some success with Burrowes. Maybe. Certainly an Otago men's team of New Zealand Under 19 champion Gary Traill, Pyper and Burrowes would be unbeatable in B grade at the nationals this year.

Michael Brosnahan is another arrival, the former South Canterbury representative coming down to attend Otago University. He will help fill out the depth of better players in what should be a very even A grade competition.

Grant Wilson, who will once again be making weekly treks down from the Waianakarua Mill House (the place to stop if you're travelling between Christchurch and Dunedin) to play for Kaikorai, Brendon Sparrow, who will be keen to build on his very good results with the New Zealand Under 15 team in Australia last year, Chris Sparrow and Duffy himself are four more who will ensure that competition for representative places is kept honest this season.

And the list may not end there. No one was putting in more time than Kevin Fogarty at the beginning of April and on the second night of A grade he came out snorting real fire to lower Gary Traill (admittedly a player whose competitive eyes don't appear to open until late July).

Sandy Mayes was keen when the season began, and she will hopefully be available to support Jenny Lawn in the Otago women's team this year. Debbie Foster was a surprise and welcome return from Australia in April, and with New Zealand junior rep Janene Chandler will form a good young quartet to keep Otago's A grade flag flying in 1988.

Overall, team numbers have been kept at the same level as 1987 - indeed there has even been a fractional rise over the past six seasons, which is a healthy contrast to some associations further north.

COACHING WITH HAL STEITH (THE COACH'S COACH)

Remember when the loop drive came to New Zealand? Remember how HIGH everyone used to hit a loop and how one clean miss in three was considered acceptable? It was after all considered to be quite a high risk shot, especially amongst those lesser players who'd always found a straight forehand drive a bit of a high risk shot also.

Well I think the time is right for another high risk shot to enter the game in this country, and frankly I am amazed this particular one hasn't been absorbed already - it was after all part and parcel of Englishman Stuart Gibbs' repertoire when he toured here with Denis Neale 20 years ago. I refer of course to the Mid Air Overhead Long Table Slice Smash, a shot I myself have virtually perfected and am therefore able to pass on to the readers of this newsletter.

Now from the title of the shot it is clear that this is a stroke which will come more naturally to those who favour the long table game - around ten to twelve metres back from the table. Obviously then, fleet of foot is paramount, as one has to serve the ball into play and then scuttle back rabbit - like to the desired contact point in the distant backhand corner of the area given over to your match (this shot cannot be played in small halls). Clearly too, one cannot scuttle twelve metres in the brief period of time that elapses between the serve and the next shot, so one should gradually scuttle back, buying time by employing high gentle topspin defence, always ensuring (a) not to hit the roof of the hall and (b) forcing the ball to land just over the net so there is absolutely no chance of your opponent being unable to bury it - the worst thing that can happen is that in employing the long table high topspin defence game you accidentally land the ball deep and your opponent misses thereby losing the point and preventing you from playing the Mid Air Overhead Long Table Slice Smash, which, after all, was the whole point of the rally. Remember, it is better to play the shot and lose the point than to win the rally before you get to play the shot.

Anyway, if everything is going to plan you are now twelve metres back from the table, pinned in the backhand corner crouched and hungry. Your opponent is crashing kill after kill down your throat, grunting like Jimmy Connors, and the crowd is going bananas.

This is when you strike.

Corkscrew your body up into a little ball, if possible as low as half a metre from the floor, let the opponent play his kill, count to three higglety pigglety after you hear the grunt, and then uncoil your body and throw yourself straight up into the air ideally screaming something in a foreign language, fix your eye on a spot 25cm up the right-hand front leg of the table, and with a huge flailing overhead slashing motion, hit the ball at two million miles an hour. If you body is in the correct position - mid air and left shoulder pointing directly at the whites of your opponent's eyes, the natural laws of physics should take over, and the shot aimed at the bottom right-hand corner of the table should finish up screaming down your opponent's forehand corner, ideally still travelling at two million miles an hour. Bryan Foster used to say winning a point through attack was worth much more than winning a point through defence and believe me, if you can pull the Mid Air Overhead Long Table Slice Smash off in a match, especially at 20-all in the fifth, then I can assure you the tide of the game will turn like you have never seen the tide of a game turn before.

My own success with this shot has essentially been restricted to practice sessions, but I did pull it out of the old bag of tricks once in the Eastern Southland Open mens plate second round. My opponent was one of those smart young juniors who belt every shot out of sight and call you names as you change ends, so I thought I'd teach him a thing or two. In the interests of conserving energy I forfeited the first two sets (northern readers might be surprised to learn the Eastern Southland mens plate is played over five sets but there you go) and had got off to a rather hesitant start in the third, being down 2-16, when I decided to play the Mid Air Overhead Long Table Slice Smash. I had begun the backwards rabbit scuttle expertly and I was seeing the ball like a pumpkin when the little swine played a drop shot. I hurtled in foaming and wild-eyed and split my skull open on the end of the table.

NZ TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

LIST OF TOURNAMENTS

1988

22 July 1988

Tue	Jul 19	Counties Secondary Schools Tourn.in Papakura
Sat	Jul 23	Counties Senior Open Championships in Papakura
		Region 2 Rating tournaments - senior
Sat	Jul 23	Otago v Canterbury in Dunedin
Sat-Sun	Jul 23-24	Manawatu Open Championships
		Region 3 Rating tournaments - U15/U19
Sun	Jul 24	Nelson v Marlborough (Angell Shield) in Nelson
Fri-Sun	Jul 29-31	Air NZ Auckland Open Championships
Sat	Jul 30	West Coast Open Championships
Sun	Jul 31	Canterbury Primary/Intermediate Schools tournament
		Canterbury Commercial Union Secondary Schools Teams Tournament.
Mon-Mon	Aug 1- 8	Australian U19 and U21 championships in Mackay, Queensland
Fri-Sat	Aug 5- 6	Marlborough Residential championships
Sat	Aug 6	Otago Closed Championships
Sat	Aug 6	Hamilton Open Championships
Sat-Sun	Aug 6- 7	Nelson Residential Championships
Sat-Sun	Aug 6- 7	Southland Residential Championships
Sat-Sun	Aug 6- 7	Hutt Valley Closed championships
Sun	Aug 7	Hamilton Junior Open Championships
		Region 2 Rating tournaments - U19
Sun	Aug 7	Manawatu Residential Age Group Tournament
Sat	Aug 13	Hawkes Bay Open Championships
		Region 3 Rating tournaments - Senior
Sat-Sun	Aug 13-14	Canterbury Open Championships
Fri	Aug 19	Secondary schools Term 2 finishes
Sat-Sun	Aug 20-21	Wellington Open Championships
Sat-Sun	Aug 20-21	South Island Primary/Intermediate Schools' Teams Tournament
		finals hosted by Canterbury
Fri	Aug 26	Primary/Intermediate schools Term 2 finishes
SUN-FRI	AUG 28 TO SEP 9	NEW ZEALAND CHAMPIONSHIPS IN AUCKLAND:
		Aug 28-30 Junior teams events;
		Aug 31- 2 Junior individual events;
		Sep 3 Inter-Island contests and senior practice;
		Sep 4- 6 Senior and veterans teams events;
		Sep 7- 9 Senior and age group events.
Mon	Sep 12	Schools Term 3 commences
Sun-Mon	Sep 18-26	OLYMPIC GAMES TABLE TENNIS EVENTS
Sat-Sun	Oct 8- 9	Australian senior teams championships, Sydney
Mon-Tue	Oct 10-11	International teams championship, Sydney
Wed-Fri	Oct 12-14	Australian open individual events, Sydney
Fri	Dec 9	Secondary schools Term 3 finishes
Fri	Dec 16	Primary/Intermediate schools Term 3 finishes

1989

Mon-Sun	Mar 20-26	Commonwealth Championships, Cardiff, Wales
Wed-Sun	Mar 29 to Apr 9	World Championships, Dortmund, Germany.