

AUCKLAND TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Under the Auspices of the
NEW ZEALAND TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

SECOND TEST

NEW ZEALAND v. HUNGARY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 1938



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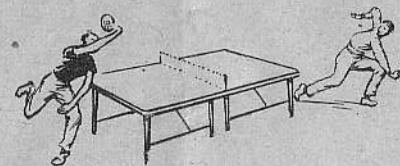
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AUCKLAND TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION (Inc.)



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GREETINGS HUNGARY!

This is a message to welcome the Hungarian table tennis players back to Auckland. They have just completed a triumphant tour of both Islands, and arrive back to play a second test match against New Zealand.

We have much to thank them for. Their superlative skill at table tennis has pleased and amazed thousands and has done much to further the interest in the game in the Dominion. Their genial good fellowship has endeared them to all with whom they have come in contact; their readiness to instruct in the finer points of the game has helped many young players; and above all their tactfulness and adaptability has made their tour of this country a most enjoyable one.

We appreciate their sportsmanship and wish them good luck for their tour of Australia, and hope sincerely that they will again be able to visit New Zealand in the near future.

BARNA AND BELLAK

BARNA:

Viktor Barna is dark, with light grey-green eyes, and of good physique. He looks slender, almost small, but is really of medium height, splendidly built with broad shoulders and slim waist, giving the impression of grace and speed.

He is genial and intensely serious about table tennis. In fact, he loves the game so much that he is always ready to do what he can to improve the standard of table tennis. With his charming manner and vivid personality he has done much to popularise the game, and his stylish play has won many new adherents to the game in New Zealand.

Five times Singles Champion of the World, and even now only twenty-six years old, Barna first came to the front rank in season 1928-9, when he reached the last eight in the World Championship, going down before an inspired Adrian Haydon in a match that is still talked about in table tennis circles.

The next season, Barna achieved his ambition of winning the World Singles title, beating Lazlo Bellak in the final. Since then he won the Championship four times, and his remarkable consistency as well as his brilliance has made him the greatest player the game has known. Unfortunately for him, he was involved in a motor accident three years ago, and broke his right arm so badly that he has not been able to hit so hard since. However, he hopes that as time goes on he will regain his old power, and once more become champion of the world.

Watching Barna play, one is struck with his ease of execution in playing every stroke. In the English Championship in 1933, he astonished the on-lookers by making a back-hand smash with his racket arm behind his back. He undoubtedly possesses an intuitive sense of opportunism that makes him excel above all players. If a sudden opening presents itself he is ready to take immediate advantage of it.

Certainly, he is one of the personalities of sport, and his charming manner is just as apparent, whether he is playing or not. He is ever ready to help young players, and his exhibitions of trick shots amazes on-lookers. He is a real master—at table tennis, and as a man.

BELLAK:

Lazlo Bellak is solidly built and almost gives the impression of being nuggety, but when he moves it is with a quickness and alertness that is most deceptive. He is always smiling, and goes his own quiet way so unobtrusively that he gains his end before anyone realises his object. He is full of dry humour, and before he achieved fame as a table tennis player he was a champion swimmer.

Bellak is regarded as the most brilliant stroke player in the world—yet he has never won the World Singles Championship! Three times he has been runner-up, and on more than one of these occasions he was considered an unlucky loser. His match temperament is not, alas, the equal of his natural playing ability. He is naturally a showman, and often the desire to make brilliant strokes overcomes his sense of tactical fitness.

He has such command over the ball as to make it almost sit up and talk. In trick shot exhibitions he will play the ball with his breath, his heel, the edge of his bat, plays with three balls, and finishes up playing a game by himself. He has many neat little tricks, such as picking the ball from the floor with his foot; pressing the palm of the hand on the ball and lifting his hand with the ball adhering to the palm.

Like Barna he is genial and charming, but is full of dry humour, and enters into things most enthusiastically. His latest craze is contract bridge, and although he has not yet reached the expert stage, he has enough enthusiasm to satisfy four experts.

At present he holds the American Singles title and has just completed a tour of thirty-five American cities. Consequently, his English, although not fluent, is full of Americanisms, and he can think more quickly in dollars than in shillings. His accent, however, lends to his humour, and with a bland smile and a single word, can cause fits of laughter. Besides holding the American Singles title, Bellak holds the World's Mixed Doubles' title with Miss Woodhead of England.

Undoubtedly Bellak is a master player and a master showman, and New Zealand crowds have more than appreciated his demonstrations of how he thinks the game should be played.

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THE AUCKLAND TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION (Inc.)

The Auckland Table Tennis Association was formed 14 years ago, and since that time the game has gradually become stronger both in numerical strength and in the playing ability of the members—a development from ping-pong to the fast and scientific game of table tennis.

The pioneers of the Association were a group of tennis enthusiasts who saw the possibilities in the table game as a wonderful way of keeping in practice during the winter months. These men were A. C. Johns, V. R. Johns, J. Fogarty, H. W. Tyer, and A. K. Turner. Only a few teams were entered the first year, but the game soon attracted the attention of other tennis players. At this time a wooden bat and a heavy ball were in use, and the half volley game was the mainstay of stroke production. It is interesting to remember that overseas the game was not much further ahead. The first World's Championships were held in 1926.

In New Zealand in 1926, F. Paton showed that by hitting the ball hard, a faster game resulted, and the game began to become more speedy. The orthodox grip was the penholder; it was very useful for half-volleying, and for finishing off a rally with a forehand drive.

In 1927 M. Withers first showed the possibilities of the rubber bat. Ninety per cent. of players in Auckland did not know how to handle the spin imparted to the ball by the rubber. It was the forerunner of the new game, but tradition dies hard, and leading players kept using the wooden bats.

Until 1932 the speeding up of the game did not progress materially. The reason we know now, was because the penholder grip was too stereotyped, and there was no variety in the play to appeal to the public. In 1933, however, Perry and Wilde, the English Davis Cup tennis players, toured New Zealand, and played table tennis in Auckland and Wellington. Both were English Internationals in table tennis and Perry had won the World's Singles title in 1928. From the remarks both these players made, it was obvious that they did not think highly of either the penholder grip or of the wooden bat. After the New Zealanders had seen them play it was agreed that the tennis style and rubber bats as used by the visitors made for a much more attractive and interesting game.

In 1934 the first New Zealand Championships were held in Wellington. Many interested and enthusiastic spectators saw E. Cheal defeat F. Paton in a five set final. The former used a rubber bat and played an unorthodox semi-tennis style. The latter used a cork bat and played with the orthodox penholder grip. The game was fast and spectacular, but was too stereotyped to be proper table tennis. The ladies in this championship still played "ping-pong." Miss Masters, of Wellington, the winner of the singles title gained her victory by superior steadiness combined with an unexpected drive on her forehand.

Next year came a lull. The younger players were not yet good enough to challenge the leading players; some players were changing to tennis style and were equally indifferent at tennis and penholder grips; the first-class players who had not changed their style did not improve, and the standard of the game was no higher than that of the previous year. F. Paton defeated J. Herbert in a very stereotyped final of the N.Z. Championship.

1936 saw the rise of the younger school. Table tennis was at last really played in Auckland. Backhand and forehand were hit with powerful yet graceful strokes, and these shots combined with intricate spin services gave local players a new conception of the game.

Clubrooms had to be larger to provide the back play required. Instead of constant half volleying close to the table, players used a larger area, and it was nothing to see the ball being hit hard from 15ft. behind the table. Consequently when the N.Z. Championships were played that year a new standard of play was revealed. Playing tennis style and hitting accurately with inspired pace, K. Cantlay, of Auckland, beat G. Bell, of Wellington, in the Men's Final. In the Ladies' title, the penholder style still reigned, and Miss Dove, the 1935 Champion, retained her title by means of a fast forehand drive.

The standard continued to improve. Players who had changed to tennis style became expert with the new grip. More younger players improved and 1937 became a table tennis boom year. Not only were the N.Z. Championships thrilling and exciting, but two Hungarian world champions visited New Zealand. This visit aroused much public interest and the Concert Chamber of the Town Hall could not accommodate the large crowd who wished to see the

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FAIR PLAY AND GOOD SERVICE

Hungarians in action. The Auckland team to play against the visitors was:—E. Cheal, J. Munns, J. Swift, K. Cantlay, H. Boys, F. Paton, and I. Drabble. They were beaten badly but had the satisfaction of knowing the Hungarians regarded their play as being of a higher standard than that of Australia. Besides this visit, the game gained still further popularity in Auckland by the institution of the North Island Championships. These were held in Auckland, and the singles titles were won by J. Swift and Miss A. Wilkinson, both local players.

This brings us to 1938—another boom year. Two more Hungarians are visiting New Zealand and creating much interest in Auckland with their marvellous and spectacular ball control. Clubrooms continue to become larger to deal with the increasing numerical strength and the greater amount of back room required by the players.

The rooms obtained contain nine tables to accommodate the 75 teams playing in the interclub competitions, and for the visit of the Hungarians the main Town Hall was requisitioned and filled to capacity.

This review would be incomplete without reference to the sad loss to the Auckland Association by the death of J. Munns at the beginning of the year. This player was undoubtedly the most brilliant exponent of table tennis in New Zealand. Not only was he a great player, but he devoted all his spare time to helping others master the game. K. Cantlay, the present N.Z. Champion, and I. Drabble, N.Z. Doubles Champion, are two of the younger players who owe their positions to him. It is fitting that his memory is perpetuated by the Munns Cup, presented to the Association by his friends.

Thus, the game of table tennis has grown, in Auckland, from pat ball to the fastest ball game in the world.

HONOURS BOARD OF AUCKLAND AND N.Z. TABLE TENNIS TITLES N.Z. CHAMPIONSHIPS

Men's Singles:	Ladies' Singles:	Ladies' Doubles:
1934 E. Cheal (Ak)	1934 Miss E. Masters (Wn)	1934 Misses M. Williams & J. Hollis (Wn.)
1935 F. Paton (Ak)	1935 Miss I. Dove (Ak)	1935 Misses A. Carter & D. McAdam (Ak)
1936 K. Cantlay (Ak)	1936 Miss I. Dove (Ak)	1936 Misses K. Tustin & Walsh (H.V.)
1937 K. Cantlay (Ak)	1937 Miss A. Wilkinson "	1937 Misses A. Wilkinson & D. McAdam (Ak)
Men's Doubles:	Mixed Doubles:	
1934 C. Williams & H. D. Kennedy (Wn)	1934 R. Dennis & Miss L. Hughes (Wn)	
1935 G. Bell & H. Pyle (Wn.)	1934 R. Dennis & Miss L. Hughes (Wn)	
1936 H. Boys & K. Cantlay (Ak)	1936 W. McFarlane and Miss B. Strang (Wn)	
1937 F. Paton & I. Drabble (Ak)	1937 I. Drabble & Miss D. McAdam (Ak)	

Ak.—Auckland; Wn.—Wellington; H.V.—Hutt Valley

AUCKLAND CHAMPIONS Men's Singles:

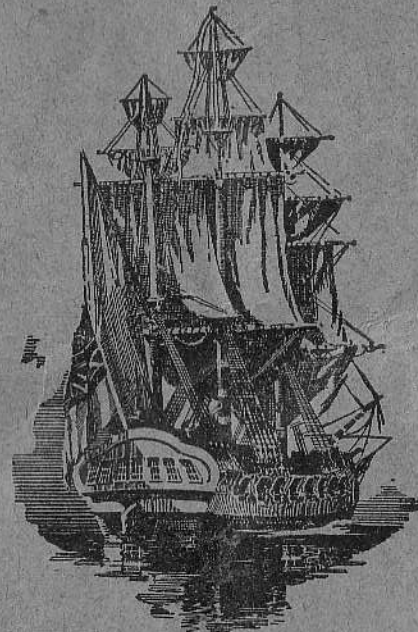
1924 A. Turner	1931 F. Paton
1925 J. Fogerty	1932 F. Paton
1926 F. Paton	1933 F. Paton
1927 F. Paton	1934 C. Burke
1928 S. Morpeth	1935 C. Burke
1929 J. H. Miller	1936 J. Munns
1930 F. Paton	1937 F. Paton
Ladies' Singles:	Mixed Doubles:
1934 Miss D. McAdam	1934 R. Stallworthy & Miss D. Tanfield
1935 Miss W. Bond	1935 C. Burke & Miss L. Hemus
1936 Miss A. Wilkinson	1936 H. Boys & Miss I. Dove
1937 Miss A. Wilkinson	1937 A. Stowell & Miss D. Tanfield
Ladies' Doubles:	Men's Doubles:
1934 Misses D. McAdam & A. Carter	1934 F. Paton & R. Stallworthy
1935 Misses D. McAdam & A. Carter	1935 F. Paton & R. Stallworthy
1936 Misses J. Gillies & M. Manson	1936 H. Boys & K. Cantlay
1937 Misses W. Bond & I. Dove	1937 F. Paton & I. Drabble

No records are available of the other titles, till 1934, and doubles play was not introduced into Auckland until that year.

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