

THE AUCKLAND TABLE TENNIS ASS.

**PROUDLY PRESENTS
INTERNATIONALS**

**MICHEL
HAGUENAUER**

**JOHNNY
LEACH**



SPECIAL MATCHES

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AVONDALE COLLEGE

28TH JUNE 1951

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Johnny Leach

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President's Message

Once more we are fortunate to welcome overseas players to New Zealand. In fact, we are doubly fortunate in that one of the players is the reigning world champion.

It is 18 years since we saw an English-born world table tennis champion in this country, and the memories of Perry of 1933 will be revived by Leach of 1951.

Also the visit of Michel Haguenaer is the first of distinguished table tennis Frenchmen, and gives the present tour an international flavour.

We wish the visitors an interesting and enjoyable tour.

Previous Tours

In 1933, while on a tennis tour of New Zealand, the former world champion, Fred Perry, and his partner, F. H. D. Wilde, an English representative, played against leading local players. Until this time the wooden bat and the pen-grip had been the standard in this country, but the brilliant long defence of Perry and the easy all-round stroking obtained by the Englishmen with their tennis grip caused most leading New Zealand players to remodel their game.

The N.Z.T.T.A., in conjunction with Australia, invited two Hungarian stars, Michael Szabados and Istvan Kelen, to tour in 1937. These players, both former world champions, showed the wonderful strides made in Table Tennis overseas, and none of the N.Z. players were able to cope with the Hungarians.

The year 1938 saw the first visit of Victor Barna. Partnered by Laszlo Bellak, these two most famous members of the all-dominating Hungarian Swathling Cup team amazed and amused large crowds throughout N.Z. with their brilliant exhibitions of ball control. This tour probably helped N.Z. Table Tennis more than any other tour.

In spite of the war the standard in this country continued to rise, and when, in 1949, Victor Barna once more visited this country partnered by Richard Bergmann, he was pleasantly surprised with the progress made.

NEW ZEALAND EXECUTIVE 1951

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NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS

Since the formation of the N.Z. Table Tennis Association in 1934 a number of New Zealand teams, both official "All Black" and semi-official, have represented this country in play against the cream of the world's players.

First of these was an official team selected in 1937 to play the Hungarian internationals—Szabados, a world championship title-holder, and Kelen, who were touring N.Z. Members of this New Zealand team were K. Cantlay and H. Boys, of Auckland, and M. Gosling and E. Boniface, of Wellington.

Two years later, 1939, the first and official touring side to leave New Zealand (and to date the only one) crossed the Tasman to Australia. H. Boys, K. Cantlay and E. Boniface were again members, the fourth player being the new national champion, 18-year-old Russell Algie.

In 1949 Barna and Bergmann, both ex-world title-holders, toured Australia and New Zealand as an English T.T.A. team. International status was gained during this tour by W. Fogarty and V. N. Brightwell (Otago), J. Borough (Canterbury) and L. M. Wilson, H. Lauder and H. Chapman (Wellington).

New Zealand players, although not quite strong enough, provided interesting games, and the tour led to a great increase in interest, with capacity houses viewing both test and provincial games.

The year 1950 saw another landmark in New Zealand table tennis history, when for the first time this country was represented in the annual tournament for the Swathling Cup—the Davis Cup of table tennis. The players concerned were not officially selected but travelled to Europe at their own expense and were granted the status of an official team by the N.Z.T.T.A. Comprising J. Crossley, V. N. Brightwell and J. Stewart, the team met with little success but gained much valuable experience, and Crossley became the first New Zealander to win a European title when he won the Scottish singles.

This year J. Borough, T. Flint and J. Knowsley followed the example of the 1950 team and competed in the Swathling Cup matches at Vienna.

In 1952 the World Championships will be held in India, and it is proposed for the first time to send an official N.Z. team to participate in these and the Swathling Cup matches to be held in conjunction with them. Competition for the team is expected to be keen, and a number of leading players have been asked if they will be available.

Johnny Leach

Born in London in 1923, Johnny Leach did not commence to play competitive Table Tennis until 1938. Under the guidance of Jack Carrington, famous coach, he began to develop into a better than average player in a very short time. Having served five years in the R.A.F., Leach teamed up with Carrington and Vera Dace, the English ladies' champion, and travelled 13,000 miles entertaining troops.

Competing in the world championships in 1947, Leach reached the semi-finals of the singles and the finals of the doubles. Then, in 1949, he played the game of his life to defeat Vana for the world singles title. This was Leach's first victory over Vana—an ex-world champion.

Throughout 1950 Johnny toured England playing exhibitions. Short of match play, he strove to retain his world singles, but was defeated by Haguenauer.

Later he visited U.S.A., where, partnered by Carrington, he won three national titles.

At the world championships at Vienna this year Leach had his second world singles success. He is the first English-born player to win the title twice. Prior to the World Meeting he won the English doubles with Carrington.

A tall player, he favours defence, but has an excellent attack.

A MESSAGE FROM JOHNNY LEACH

I am greatly looking forward to meeting New Zealand table tennis players and fans in their home country. The many New Zealanders I have met in Europe, and my friends Victor Barna and Richard Bergmann, have told me enough about New Zealand to make me very keen to see it for myself. I am grateful to the New Zealand Table Tennis Association for its hard work to make the visit possible.

Table tennis has led me to nearly every country in Europe and to America. It has always been my ambition to visit New Zealand and Australia, and I am sure, from all I have heard, that in these farthest countries from home I shall feel most at home. I count myself very fortunate to be able to come as the holder of the world singles championship. When I mention that between my two victories in 1949 and 1951 the man who pipped me in Budapest was my travelling partner, Michel Haguenauer, you will have some idea of the tough but friendly rivalry between the great Frenchman and myself.

We hope our matches will interest you and benefit the game in your country.

JOHNNY LEACH.

Michel Haguenauer

Twenty times champion of France (closed championship) is one of the records of Michel Haguenauer, tall, debonair Frenchman who is touring with Johnny Leach. Mainly a defensive player, Haguenauer relies on his wonderful reach to return almost impossible shots.

With a slightly unorthodox grip—he has no finger on the blade—and with endless energy, no champion can feel safe while Haguenauer is still in any tournament. In the 1933 world tourney he won the consolation singles, and every year since he has represented France.

The giant-killer role has twice been his. First, in 1936, Haguenauer defeated that apparently undefeatable champion Victor Barna. Again, in 1950, the honour was his when in five gruelling sets he defeated Leach, the reigning champion.

Perhaps his best year was 1950, for besides defeating Leach, he was runner-up to Bergmann in the English championships. In the Daily Mirror "focus on stars" tournament he had his revenge when he defeated Bergmann and Leach. Other titles include the Swiss and Dutch.

A MESSAGE FROM MICHEL HAGUENAUER

Although in the course of a long table tennis career—I have played it in most countries of the world—this is the first opportunity I have had of visiting New Zealand. I have heard a great deal about the rapidly-increasing popularity of the game in your country and of the recent big improvements in your playing standard.

I look forward to the forthcoming tour with my very distinguished friend, world champion Johnny Leach, and it will be our fervent desire to give at least as much entertainment as we ourselves receive.

MICHEL HAGUENAUER.

AUCKLAND TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION (Inc.)



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Sir John Allum, K.C.B., O.B.E.

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OFFICIAL COACH:
R. A. Algie.

Programme

EVENT

1. M. Haguenauer v. R. A. Algie.
Best of five games, 21 up.
Umpire: Mr. A. Wilkinson.

Result

2. J. Leach v. R. V. Jackson
Best of five games, 21 up.
Umpire: Mr. E. Smith

Result

3. J. Leach and M. Haguenauer
v.
J. Crossley and V. N. Brightwell.
Best of five games, 21 up.
Umpire: Mr. L. Howe

Result

INTERVAL (10 minutes)

4. J. Leach v. R. A. Algie.
Best of five games, 21 up.
Umpire: Mr. O. Bracey.

Result

5. M. Haguenauer v. R. V. Jackson.
Best of five games, 21 up.
Umpire: Mr. N. Doo

Result

6. Special Exhibition Match:
J. Leach v. M. Haguenauer.
Best of three games, 21 up.
Umpire: Mr. O. Bracey

Result

The Players

R. A. ALGIE

A left-hander who has been in the forefront of table tennis for many years. He has won the N.Z. singles title five times—1939, 1940, 1945, 1947, 1949. His game is based on an excellent defence. This defence, combined with a forehand counter-attack and well-concealed backhand flick, has made Algie one of New Zealand's best table tennis players.

R. V. JACKSON

As the present N.Z. champion, Jackson is an all-round player possessing a fine backhand attack, an accurate top spin forehand and a neat defence. Although only 19, he has not been defeated in a five-set match for two seasons. He represented Auckland against Barna and Bergmann in 1949.



J. CROSSLEY

A player with a fierce attack, both backhand and forehand. He gained experience, maturity and excellence with a visit to England and the Continent in 1949. He won the Scottish singles title and returned to New Zealand to become a finalist in the New Zealand singles. He is the only New Zealand player to take a game from J. Leach during the present tour.

V. N. BRIGHTWELL

An Otago player with a good all-round open game. He hits crisp shots both backhand and forehand and favours attack to win his games. He also gained overseas experience with J. Crossley, and, with Crossley, is the present holder of the men's New Zealand doubles title.

Auckland Table Tennis

The Auckland Table Tennis Association was formed 27 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. Only a few teams were entered the first year, but the game soon attracted the attention of other tennis players. At this time the wooden bat and a heavy ball were in use, and the half-volleying 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 1927 Mr. M. Withers first showed the possibilities of the rubber bat. Ninety per cent of the 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 wooden bats.

The visit of Perry and Wilde, the English Davis Cup players in 1933, showed fully the possibilities of the tennis style and rubber bat game, and opened a new era in Auckland table tennis.

In 1934 the first N.Z. Championships were held and the men's singles was won by an Aucklanders using a rubber bat.

The year 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 allow 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. The standard of play continued to improve, and the visit by two Hungarian world champions in 1937 and a visit by a further pair of Hungarians in 1938 gave both players and the public of Auckland a new conception of table tennis and placed the game as a major indoor sport.

In 1938 the death of J. Munns was a sad loss to the Auckland Association, as this player was undoubtedly the most brilliant exponent of table tennis to be seen in New

Zealand. Not only was he a great player, but he devoted all his spare time to helping others to master the game. N.Z. champions such as K. Cantlay and I. Drabble owe their success in table tennis to his wonderful coaching.

In 1939 a visit was made to Australia by a N.Z. team of four players, two of whom were Aucklanders—K. G. Cantlay and H. F. Boys.

Auckland table tennis owes much to Mr. H. W. Brien for the splendid work he did during the war years in assisting to maintain organisation and interest.

1949 saw the record number of 187 teams, comprising in the most part of young and enthusiastic players, striving hard to create a new high standard in the game.

1949 also saw the visit of two English world champions, V. Barna and R. Bergmann, who visited the country to give our younger players the incentive to bring their game to world standard.

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

Autographs

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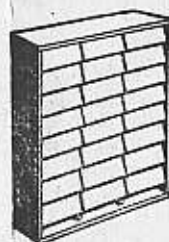
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