

Some Interesting bits about Table Tennis from UK Newspaper "Telegraph" web site (April 2007)

- Last year, Chinese Olympic table tennis champion Chen Qi lost his temper during a televised game and kicked a chair. As a result, he was sent to military boot camp and forced to do a week of hard labour on a farm. Having fed pigs, plucked cucumbers and irrigated fields, Qi says he now feels like "a new person".
- According to the Inter-national Olympic Committee, table tennis is the world's largest participation sport, with more than 40 million competitive players alone. It was also the basis of the first commercially successful video game, Pong.
- No one knows who invented the sport. It is thought to have begun as an after-dinner game by British Army officers in the 1880s, using the round top of a Champagne cork as a ball and cigar boxes as paddles. Basketball and netball were invented at the same time.
- The difference between ping-pong and table tennis is that "Ping-Pong" is a trademark belonging to J Jaques & Son in Britain and to Parker Bros in the US, so it's only ping-pong if you're using their kit.
- Table tennis was also commonly referred to as Gossima, Netto, the Royal Game, Pim-Pam, Pom-Pom, Tennis de Salon and Parlour Tennis.
- Charlie Chaplin suffered a cruel and humiliating table tennis defeat at the hands of Maxwell Woosnam, an Olympic tennis champion. When Woosnam visited Chaplin's home in 1921, Woosnam beat the actor using a butter knife in place of a bat. Attempting to cheer Chaplin up, Woosnam then threw him into his own swimming pool and was promptly asked to leave.
- Table tennis became a competitive sport in 1927 but was banned in the Soviet Union from 1930 to 1950 because authorities believed the sport was harmful to people's eyes.
- Britain's last great tennis player, Fred Perry, won the World Table Tennis Championships in 1929. He only took up the game of tennis aged 18, but his exceptional speed (gleaned from table tennis) enabled him to play at Wimbledon two years later.
- At the 1936 World Championships in Prague, one point lasted more than an hour. Although the crowds began to leave the stadium, Poland's Alex Ehrlich didn't mind. He had a chessboard placed on the sideline and whispered his moves to the Polish captain. By the end of the point, which consisted of more than 12,000 shots, the referee had to be replaced because his neck was so sore.

- In the same year, entertainer Harry Richman - who wrote songs such as Puttin' on the Ritz - flew the Atlantic with a plane crammed with table tennis balls. Richman thought that the plane had a better chance of staying afloat if it came down at sea.
- In 1971, the US table tennis team became the first group of Americans allowed into China since the Communist takeover in 1949. Described as "ping-pong diplomacy", exhibition matches between the US and China table tennis teams ushered a new era between the superpowers. Time magazine called it: "The ping heard around the world."
- Croatian table tennis player Professor Zarko Dolinar (1920-2003) holds a quite interesting record. He is the only athlete to have won eight world championships while holding a doctorate of science. It is also thought that he taught John Lennon how to play.
- Table tennis became an Olympic sport in 1988. The international rules were changed in 2001 so that all tournaments played under official auspices are now to 11 points, not 21. Serves alternate every two points, instead of five.
- In 2000, the International Table Tennis Federation insisted that the balls should increase by 2mm. The ruling made the sport easier to watch on television and slowed the game down by about 14 per cent.
- Karmarama, Britain's least successful table tennis club, also acts as the Conservative Party's advertising agency.