



# **ACROSS THE NET**

## **Melton Table Tennis**

April 2016

### **THE VICTORIAN SQUAD GETS A BOOST, WE SIZZLE SAUSAGES, AND MORE CHAMPS RETIRE**

In this edition, we congratulate a member on making the Victorian squad, wrap up our summer season and the World Teams Championships, do some maths on our game, and celebrate the careers of two retiring champions.

### **LAST EDITION WRAP-UP**

And didn't the last edition get the conversation going! It seems that there are as many opinions of what constitutes a legal serve as there are readers of *Across The Net*. Melton Table Tennis intends on being proactive with this, and will be providing further information to players and umpires to ensure that we all comply with the requirements of this rule.

The members of the committee will be paying more attention to all matches and, if we see anything obviously incorrect, will discuss it with the player concerned at the end of the match.

*This is not a witch-hunt.* We don't want to stop people enjoying the game, but we do want to make sure that the game is played within the existing rules, and we want to make sure that MTTA players are doing the right thing when representing the club at challenge matches or tournaments.

### **WILL-POWER HAS HIM GOING PLACES**

It is with great pride that we can announce that **Will Corluka** has been invited to join the **Victorian Para Training Squad**.

Will, pictured here with the co-captain of the Australian Paralympic Team for Rio, **Danni Di Toro**, attended the training session for the *Australian Para Table Tennis team* and, after spending time on the table with some of the best para players in the country, was invited to join the Victorian squad.

Having the opportunity to train with the para squad on a regular basis under the watchful eyes of Victorian Para Development Coach, **Mick Tomlinson**, supercoach **Alois Rosario**, and our own club coach, **Chris Addis**, will no doubt improve Will's skill level and should see him moving up the ranks within the club.



Attending his first tournament at Croydon a few weeks ago, Will acquitted himself admirably, winning his first match before coming up against **Sam Von Einem**. As regular readers will know, Sam is currently the top para player in Australia, and looks certain to represent Australia at the Rio Paralympics.

With a couple of other matches under his belt, Will finished the day as a spectator, but still with the trademark smile on his face.

### **SUMMER SEASON COMES TO AN END**

Our first season of the year has concluded, and we congratulate the winners.

The **A Grade** Grand Final saw **Brad Gibson, Larry Hallinan** and **Chris Addis** triumph over **John Weightman, Chris Blake** and **Tom Tsotsos** filling in for **Paul Hetherington**.

**B Grade** had **Steve Batten, Shannon Camilleri** and **Geof Walker** taking the chocolates over **Wayne Atkins, Brian Barker** and **Steve Jaunkalns**.

The battle for honours in **C1 Grade** went to **Jess O'Dea, Will Corluka** and **Glenn O'Dea** filling in for **Annemarie Rothwell**, over **Sarah Lappin, Jesse McKinnes** and **Neville Yianni**.

**C2 Grade** winners were **Jesse Fletcher-Gass, Anthony O'Sullivan** and **Jason Craddock** filling in for **James Brown-Kerr**, victorious over **Angela Cricchiola, Katia Corluka** and **Anna Jurkovic**.

Leading Player for **A Grade** was **Matt Camilleri** who beat **John Weightman** for the honours. **Dean Camilleri** took out the **B Grade** Leading Player award in a countback from **Shannon Camilleri** and **Steve Batten**. **Sarah Lappin** won the Leading Player for **C1 Grade** in a countback from **Jess O'Dea**, with **Jesse Fletcher-Gass** taking the award for **C2 Grade** over **Jason Craddock**.

### **CRAIG SAYS "HI"**

Still in hospital, but with his spirits high, **Craig Archman** continues his recovery. And while lacking a lot of movement, he is already planning his return to the club. Craig is still not able to walk un-aided, but is now able to stand with assistance.

Speaking to Craig over the weekend, he asked me to pass on his thanks to all who have visited him or sent him good wishes.

But just because he can't leave the hospital, he is not totally "off the grid". At the instigation of some of his friends, donations have been collected from Craig's mates in the poker and table tennis circles, and enough money has been raised to purchase a laptop for Craig to use during his recovery.

So even if you can't get in to see Craig in person, let him know that you're thinking of him on social media. I'm sure he'll appreciate it.

### **SAUSAGE SIZZLE IS ON**

This Sunday, the **3<sup>rd</sup> of April**, Melton Table Tennis will be holding a Sausage Sizzle at **Bunnings Warehouse** in Melton to raise money for the club. This money will go towards coaching and equipment costs for the club.

As important as raising money is, we will be handing out flyers and business cards to anyone who looks even half-interested in an effort to raise awareness of the club and of table tennis in general.

If you are able to assist us by volunteering some time on the day to help with the cooking, serving, or being a flyer-hander-outerer (it's a technical term – look it up), please contact **Chris Blake** on **0438 058 779** to register your interest.

## **AMAZING MAZE RETIRES**

In a career hampered by continuous injury, **Michael Maze** has announced his retirement at the age of 34.

Born in Fakse, Denmark in 1981, Maze was a left-hander who started playing table tennis when aged **7**. His talent was quickly spotted, and he joined the Danish national team in 1997. He was best known for his ability to play away from the table using defensive play as a weapon.

As well as representing Denmark at the **2000** and **2004** Olympic Games, Michael became the **2009** European Singles Champion, defeating Austrian **Werner Schlager** in the final.

*"In consultation with my doctors and management we came to this very difficult decision", he explained. "I had hoped to compete at this summer's Olympic Games in Rio but my body just can't take it anymore; after several operations I can no longer train one hundred per cent without pain and therefore not compete at the level I'm used to."*

A sad end to a great career.

## **WORLD TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP WRAP-UP**



At the start of March, the **World Teams Championship** was run in *Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*. Would it surprise you to learn that the Chinese won? No? Me neither. But there were some interesting results and interesting goings on during the week-long event.

In both the Men's and the Women's finals, it was **China** beating **Japan** 3-0, showing the clear dominance of the Chinese at the top level. It also shows that Japan is poised, ready to pounce if the Chinese team even look like flinching.

While watching China play in a semi-finals match, I was amazed to see the world's number one player, **Ma Long** serve into the net twice in a row, and as I smiled I thought, *"I can do that!"*.

The **Indian Men's** and **Women's** teams, competing in *Division 2* both won and will now be promoted to *Division 1* for the next Teams World Championships.

The umpires in the **Japan vs England** semi-final have obviously been reading recent editions of *Across The Net*, as they called players from both sides for illegal serves during the match. Wow. I didn't think our newsletter would have *that* much influence.

The Men's team from **England** surprised everyone, possibly including themselves, by finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> after going down in a valiant effort to the very strong Japanese team. Keep your eyes on **Liam Pitchford** (pictured) and **Sam Walker**. Based on their efforts in these Championships, they will be worth watching in the future.



The **Australian Men's** team managed to win one of their preliminary matches, and dropped from 38<sup>th</sup> in the world to 41<sup>st</sup>. The **Women's** team performed well, winning their group, but didn't advance any further than that. They also dropped places, going from 48<sup>th</sup> to 53<sup>rd</sup> on the world teams ranking.

Controversially, as predicted in a previous edition of *Across The Net*, the teams from **Israel** did not compete after being refused entry visa's into Malaysia. We await the reaction of the ITTF.

## **OCEANIA OLYMPIC QUALIFICATIONS**

Played in **Bendigo** on Good Friday was the **Olympic Qualification** matches for the Oceania region. With a full day of great table tennis, 6 worthy competitors received their qualification cards for the **2016 Rio Olympics**.

Attended by **ITTF President, Thomas Weikert**, and played at the Ulumbarra Theatre in Bendigo, the event has produced history, joy and heartache.



First to get his Golden ticket was *Victorian David Powell* (pictured left), who won his best-of-seven match against Chris Yan from *NSW*, 11-9 in the seventh game.

**Chris Yan** (pictured right) was able to gain his qualification later in the day by beating Teng Teng Lui from *New Zealand* 4-0. Both David and Chris will be playing in their first Olympics.



The third position for Men from the Oceania region went to **Teng Teng Lui** who beat **Yoshua Shing** from *Vanuatu* to secure his spot in Rio.



On the Women's side, *Victorian Jian Fang Lay* (pictured left) was dominant in her match against Melissa Tapper, winning 4-1 and ensuring her attendance at her fifth consecutive Olympic Games at the age of **43**.

**Melissa Tapper** (pictured right), also from *Victoria*, easily accounted for 13 year old **Grace Yee** from *Fiji* to pick up her ticket. Amazingly, this makes Melissa the first Australian, and only the 13th athlete in history to compete in both Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In her interview after the match, Melissa said that she would be using the Olympic Games in August as a "warm-up tournament" in preparation for the Paralympic Games being held at the same venue a few weeks later.

*Really?* Has any other athlete in history said that they were using the Olympic Games as a *warm-up tournament*? But you can see her point. As well-deserved as her spot in the Australian Olympic team is, Melissa recognises that her main chance at a medal is at the Paralympics, and we all wish her well in both competitions.



So you'd think that the emotions would be all rung out by now, wouldn't you. But no. In the fight for the final Olympic position from the Oceania region, 14 year old **Sally Yee** from *Fiji* had to compete against her 13 year old sister, **Grace**. Sally prevailed over her sister in a 4-0 victory, but the expression on her face at the end of the match was a mixture of excitement at having won the chance to represent her country at the Olympics, and the disappointment of knowing that her victory robbed her sister of the same chance. Her expression changed to one of sheer panic when she realised that she would be interviewed on stage after the match, but she survived this with dignity.

So out of the 4 Australians to qualify for the 2016 Rio Olympics, three of them are from Victoria. Let's get behind our athletes and let them know they have our support on sport's biggest stage.



## SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Now it's time for some simple maths. *What?* You didn't know that table tennis had any maths in it? Well, you have been misled, my friend. Allow me to explain.

I was thumbing through a catalogue the other day, and my thoughts wandered to combinations. How many different types of table tennis bat can you buy? How many different types of rubbers? Although I wasn't seriously involved in the sport back then, I have read reports from the mid-seventies that there were very few players who used anything except **Sriver** or **Mark-V** rubbers, so it would seem that the market was much more limited.

But now players have so much choice that even the experts would have trouble explaining the difference between the relative benefits of Shifter, Shifter Powersponge, Saviga, Super Power, Slice 40, Sonex JP, SP Transcend, SST, Super FX, Sapphira, Spin Art, Sriver, Sriver EL, Sriver FX, Sriver G2, Sriver G2-FX, Sriver G3, Sriver G3-FX, Super Anti, Sharping, Skyline TG2 Neo, Skyline TG3 Neo, Shark, Sigma I Pro, Sigma II Euro, Sigma III Pro, Shadow, Six Shooter Magnum, Six Shooter Pro, Super 40 Defense, Super 40 Defense Soft, Super SpinPips, Sirocco SF, Snowflake Long Pimples, Snowflake Special Long Pimples, Soft Anti Special, Soft Anti-Spin Special, Spring 3B, just to name *some* of the available rubbers which start with the letter 'S'.

Browsing through the online catalogue of a well-known, reputable table tennis supplier, I found **650** different types of blade. The same supplier listed **635** different types of rubber.

So here's where the maths comes in. The possible number of combinations of blade and rubber is **650** times **635**, right? That's a possible **412,750** different combinations. But wait, there's more. You don't have to have the same rubber on both sides of your bat. So we can take that figure and multiply it again by **635**.

This gives a staggering **262,096,250** different combinations of blade and rubber for you to choose from.

And let's not forget that the vast majority of these rubbers also come in a variety of thicknesses, so the figure could be far greater than the over 262 million that I've calculated. Plus the fact that there are blades and rubbers available through other sources which I haven't considered. The actual number of combinations could easily exceed *half a billion*.



And you wouldn't buy a car without kicking the tyres, would you? So you'll want to try out these 262 million various combinations, right? Have a hit for about 5 minutes with each one to work out what suits you? Well, you should probably get started fairly soon. To spend 5 minutes trying each combination you will need to be at the table for just over **2,493 years**. And that's if you're playing 24 hours a day with no breaks.

So when someone tells you that they've found the perfect combination of blade and rubber for their game, check their birth certificate. If they're less than 2,000 years old, they haven't really been trying.

## J-O W PULLS THE PLUG

After a career spanning 38 years of competition, Swede, **Jan-Ove Waldner**, considered by some to be the greatest player ever, has given the game away.

In 1972, at the age of **6**, **Jan-Ove Waldner** asked his parents if he and his brother, **Kjell-Ake** could participate in a small local table tennis tournament. With the encouragement of his parents, Waldner would go on from there to become the Swedish champion for his age group by the time he was **9** years old. He turned professional at the age of **15** and won his first tournament, *and a Porsche*, at the age of **16**. Also when 16, he reached the final of the **European Championships**, losing to countryman **Mikael Appelgren**.

In 1989 he was a member of the Swedish team which defeated **China** in the final of the World Championships in **Dortmund**. This remains the last time that the Chinese Men's team did not win the world championship in this event.

Putting an emphasis on the speed at which the game is played, Jan-Ove said, *"Table tennis has become much faster. Service-receive is now more important than ever. Because there are less rally's, it's important to start attacking after the service."*



Waldner was at his peak during the 1990's. In that decade, at the Swedish National Championships, he accumulated **4 Gold** and **1 Silver** medal in the Singles and **4 Gold** and **2 Silver** in the Doubles. At the European Championships, he took **1 Gold** and **1 Silver** medal in the Singles, **1 Gold**, **1 Silver** and **1 Bronze** in Doubles, and **3 Gold** and **1 Silver** in the Team's.

He took **1 Gold**, **1 Silver** and **2 Bronze** medals in Singles at the World Championships in the 90's, along with **1 Silver** medal in Doubles and **2 Gold** and **1 Silver** in the Team's competition. In fact, his 1997 World Championship Singles Gold medal shows that he won **21 games out of 21 played**. Waldner also played in the **1992** and **1996** Olympic Games, picking up the Gold in the Singles at **Barcelona**.

Known as **"The Mozart of table tennis"**, such was his fame that during the 1990's he was more recognised in China than U.S. president **Bill Clinton**.

Jan-Ove had a serious injury which affected his playing career, but it wasn't sustained in competition, nor in practice. In **2002**, Jan-Ove broke his foot when he tripped on a step in a pub while on his way to the toilet. He recovered from that, but the golden years of the 90's didn't return.

Continuing to play, in an amazing feat of longevity, Waldner won his ninth Swedish championship in 2010, defeating **Pär Gerell**, who was born in the year that Waldner won his first Swedish championship.

He was awarded the **Svenska Dagbladet Gold Medal** as the most significant Swedish sportsperson of the year twice; the first as part of the *Swedish National table tennis team* in **1989**, and as an individual player in **1992**. In 2013, he was given the honour of being the first foreigner to appear on a Chinese postage stamp.

With **9** Swedish Singles Championships, **7** Swedish Doubles Championships, **11** European Gold medals, **3** World Championship Singles Gold medals, **4** World Championship Teams Gold medals, **1** Olympic Silver medal, and **1** Olympic Gold medal, he has competed successfully at all levels.

In February this year, at the age of 50, Jan-Ove Waldner has retired from all competitive play.

## **APRIL TOURNAMENTS**

April is the time for the Junior's to stand up and be counted.

From the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup>, the **Australian Junior and Cadet Open** is being played in Tweed Heads, NSW. At the same venue, and immediately following on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> is the **Oceania Junior Championships**.

One of the National Championships takes place this month with the running of the **National Para Championships** in Perth from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of April.

The **Victorian Junior Open Championships** will take place at MSAC on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April.

Mornington Peninsula will hold their **Open Junior Tournament** on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April.

No Vet's tournaments in April. They're obviously having a Bex and a good lie down in preparation for the rest of the year.

## **ON THE WEB**

Ever wondered where all those funny or interesting videos of amazing rallies or incredible shots come from? Well, a lot of them originate from [www.tabletennisdaily.co.uk](http://www.tabletennisdaily.co.uk).

With news feeds, forums, equipment reviews and much more, this site is definately worth a regular visit. Sign up for their regular updates to keep you informed of what's happening in the world of table tennis.

*What's your favourite table tennis site on the web?* Let us know so we can share it with other members.

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## **YOUR FEEDBACK**

This is *your* club and *your* opinions are valid and valued. If you have any comments to make on the contents of this newsletter, or if you have any suggestions or information for future editions please let us know.

To contact Melton Table Tennis, email [meltontabletennis@gmail.com](mailto:meltontabletennis@gmail.com)

To contact Glenn O'Dea, email [glenn.odea@bigpond.com](mailto:glenn.odea@bigpond.com)

To contact Matt Camilleri, email [matthewpcamilleri@hotmail.com](mailto:matthewpcamilleri@hotmail.com)

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