



ACROSS THE NET

Melton Table Tennis

April 2017 **Edition 33**

ULTIMATE FUN, ONE YEAR TO GC2018, AND PRESIDENTS PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

In this edition we look forward to an Ultimate experiment, talk about balls again, look at a kid who's way better than he should be, and discuss why the ITTF president's office doesn't have a revolving door.

WANT TO TRY ULTIMATE ?

On **Thursday** the **13th** of **April**, there will be no pennant play at MTTA. This is to allow for anyone who is intending on taking a break over the Easter long weekend to get an early start. However, the club will be open for some fun and games.

We will have tables set up for practice and training as usual, and our coach and trainers will be on hand to assist anyone who feels they need it. But for the masochists in our group, we will be trying something different as well.



Have you ever heard of **Ultimate Table Tennis**? They have competitive leagues playing it in Europe, and I've seen video of it being played in South America. Imagine 4 tables pushed together with the net across the middle. *Twice the width and twice the length*. Obviously the rules have been slightly modified, but it's still table tennis... on a massive scale. We will only have a modified net, and there may be a ridge where the tables come together, but that just gives you something to aim at.

We will also be having some other fun things for you to get involved in, as well as a **special guest**. This will be a very interesting and entertaining night, and is open to anyone, whether they are MTTA members or not, so bring along some family and friends. *Entry to the event will be by donation with **ALL** money raised going to the **Royal Children's Hospital Appeal**.*

DIRECTION AT LAST

In what could possibly be one of his last actions as ITTF President, **Thomas Weikert** has decided that for the remaining **World Tour** and **Challenge Cup** matches this year, the ball to be used will be the **DHS 40+ *****. This decision has been made after the ITTF officials visited the DHS manufacturing plant in South Korea.

What the article didn't say was that they had visited and investigated all manufacturing plants of all suppliers around the world and, after extensive testing and comparison, came to the unanimous conclusion that the DHS 40+*** exceeded all expected criteria and was unquestionably the best ball available, but I'm pretty sure that's what he meant to say.

I mean, how unlikely would it be for a president to make unsubstantiated claims about something as important as table tennis balls?

MASTERCHEF'S SERVE UP SOMETHING DIFFERENT

It's always been an interesting show, but I now have a greater appreciation for **Masterchef** regular hosts **George Colombaris** and **Gary Mehigan**, and their special judge and cooking guru **Heston Blumenthal**.

During the filming of the upcoming series, Blumenthal purchased a table tennis table which was set up for their entertainment whenever they had a break. So serious were they that they had the table packed up with the other equipment and moved to wherever filming was taking place.

I wonder if they'll try using a table tennis bat to flip pancakes.



SERVICE RULE GETS MORE TALK TIME

Why are we still talking about the service rule like we are trying to explain an episode of *Game of Thrones* to someone who doesn't know what a TV is? It's so straight-forward a kindergarten drop-out could understand it, but the top officials in our sport have been unwilling to accept that there's even a problem.

And now a national controlling body who last year decided not to enforce the rule at their national championships is proposing the use of additional umpires to monitor it.

As previously reported in ***Across The Net March 2016***, the **USATT** decided that the service rule which states that hiding the ball during the serve is illegal would not be enforced at their 2016 National Championships. But in a surprising reversal, they will now be trialling the use of additional umpires standing behind the player serving to make sure they comply.

This is totally unnecessary. The existing rules cover all eventualities of the service. Additional judges are not required. What is required is for the existing umpires to enforce the service rule. The key question is *not* whether the serve was hidden, but whether the umpire was "*sure about the legality of the serve,*" with the rules also stating that "*It is the responsibility of the player to serve so that the umpire or assistant umpire can be satisfied that s/he complies with the requirements of the law.*" When players serve so the umpire cannot be "sure" and "satisfied" about the legality of the serve, ***then the serve is a fault.***

No, the chair umpires are not in the best position to judge whether or not a serve is hidden. Does that matter? No, it doesn't, because the rule states that it is the responsibility of the player to ensure that the umpire is in no doubt that the serve is legal. If the umpire is not sure, ***it's a fault.*** Pure and simple. End of story.

All we need is players who do the right thing and umpires who call them out when they don't.

GC2018 ONE YEAR AWAY

We are now only 1 year away from the **Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games**. Commencing on the **4th of April 2018**, the finest athletes from across the Commonwealth will gather in the spirit of competitiveness and friendship.

Table Tennis was introduced into the Commonwealth Games in 2002 at Manchester and has been a part of the Games ever since. On the Gold Coast it will be played at the **Oxford Studios complex**, conveniently located between *Movie World* and *Wet 'n' Wild*. Competition will be on all 11 days of the Games, with 9 medal events.

Ticket prices are some of the cheapest of all Games events. **\$20** per Adult and **\$10** per Child will get you into good seats for all preliminary sessions, with the finals costing **\$40** for Adults and **\$20** for a child. With free public transport to the venue, it will certainly be an affordable way to watch some world class table tennis.

THE RISE AND RISE OF TOMOKAZU HARIMOTO

OK, so the **India Open** is not renowned as one of the world's great championships, but any ITTF tournament has a certain amount of prestige attached to it. And let's face it, any tournament with **7** of the **top 50** men including **2** of the **top 10** would be a spectacle worth watching.

Held in New Delhi in February, the final of the India Open saw the world number 6, and top seed at the event, **Dimitrij Ovtcharov** of **Germany** taking a 4-0 victory to win the title. But let's talk a little about the loser.

Japan's **Tomokazu Harimoto** lost the final to Ovtcharov 6-11, 8-11, 4-11, 12-14 and although defeated he took a significant step in his progress to greater things. Not surprising that he lost when you're up against the world number 6, but surprising that he was in the final, as Harimoto is still only **13 years old**.

This makes him the youngest player to ever make the final of an ITTF championship. The youngest player to ever win one was fellow Japanese player **Mima Ito** who was 14 when she had her breakthrough victory. Harimoto still has 15 months to break that record.



Harimoto entered the tournament ranked **69th** in the world, and as the world's number **1 Under 18 player**. He has already been selected to represent Japan in the upcoming ITTF World Championships over more highly rated compatriots. And let's not forget that the **Tokyo Olympics** is only three and a half years away. Harimoto will no doubt be competing for a medal at his home Olympics at the age of 17.

"Harimoto is an amazing player for his age and I think he has a very very bright future.", said Ovtcharov after the match.

So think back. What were you doing when you were 13?

PRESIDENCY UP FOR GRABS

The **ITTF Annual General Meeting** will be held at the World Championships in **Dusseldorf, Germany** on the 31st of May. At this meeting there will be a three-way contest for the role of ITTF President. Current president, **Thomas Weikert** from Germany will be up against **Jean-Michel Saive** from Belgium and **Khalil Al-Mohannadi** from Qatar.

Thomas Weikert has held the position since taking over from **Adham Sharara** of Canada in 2014. He has previously held the position of European Table Tennis Federation president, and president of the German Table Tennis Federation. He also had a distinguished playing career in German and European competition.



The principal points of his candidacy are:-

- The promotion of TTX as a new form of table tennis to encourage more participation.
- Making a greater effort to market table tennis with existing partners, and finding new ones.
- The development of table tennis in “small” nations and pushing high performance programs.
- Developing new Digital platforms to achieve a stronger connection between fans and the sport.
- Keeping table tennis attractive for players, spectators and the media.



Jean-Michel Saive, a former world number one and seven-time Olympian is one of the most respected players to have even picked up a table tennis bat. He is chairman of the **Athletes Commission at the Belgian Olympic Committee (COIB)** and serves on the **European Olympic Committee’s Athletes’ Commission**. Standing for election to the ITTF for the first time, his platform consists of :-

- Creating an atmosphere of “Excellence” in all ITTF activities.
- All major decisions to be made only after extensive consultation with the member national associations and all stakeholders.
- To pay more attention to the base of our sport, and to incorporate the World Veterans Championship and the Veteran Circuit into the ITTF competitors program.
- Appoint Athlete Role Models, one male and female from each Continent, to promote our sport
- increase the number of events and medals at the Olympic Games.
- Double the development budget and to provide the necessary human resources to spread our sport throughout every part of the world.
- Players at all levels, especially at lower levels, complain about the poor quality of table tennis balls. I will personally visit our manufacturer partners.
- To convince all levels of decision-makers within the ITTF not to make any more changes to our rules (Laws of Table Tennis) for a set period of time.
- To introduce new sponsors and advertisers from different parts of the world. We must make table tennis more “fashionable.”
- Good governance and good management is my number one priority.
- I intend to lead the ITTF as a team player.



Khalil Al Mohammadi is the current President of the Qatar Table Tennis Association, and Vice President of the ITTF. He has held positions on the ITTF executive board since 2007, including the Vice Presidency on 2 previous occasions.

The points listed for his candidacy are:-

- Ensuring major marketing improvement with title sponsors for all World title events; in particular the ITTF World Tour
- Increasing the popularity of table tennis worldwide, gaining the recognition of all major television channels
- Promoting ITTF Development Programmes in all aspects
- Unifying the eligibility rule for all international events to be the same as the regulations required for the Olympic Games
- Transparency in all ITTF financial transactions

It's interesting that none of the candidates felt it necessary to promise to build a wall. Nominations close on the 30th of April. We'll let you know if anyone else puts their hand up for the job.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PRESIDENTS PAST

THE ITTF has been in existence for just over **90 years**. In that time, the organisation has had just seven presidents. **Seven**. That's all. In the same time, The **USA** has had **17 presidents**, **England** has had **20 Prime Ministers**, **Australia** has had **24 Prime Ministers**, and **Italy** has had **47 Prime Ministers**.

So who are these seven individuals who have steered our game through a World War, a Cold War, shifts in global power and natural disasters to have **222** federations – the most of any sport in the world, united by the concept of hitting a little white ball over a net more times than the person at the other end of the table?



Ivor Montagu (President from 1926 to 1967)

Montagu is 1 of 10 men who met in Germany in **January 1926** and set in motion a series of events that made table tennis an international sport. In 1926, Montagu initiated the creation of the International Table Tennis Federation and served as its first president for **41 years** until 1967. The ITTF began with four member countries and grew to 160 national associations during his leadership.

The constitution and laws of the sport of table tennis were adopted and the World Table Tennis Championships established during a meeting at the family home of Lord and Lady Swaythling, Montagu's parents. At age 18, he was a founder of the **English Table Tennis Association (ETTA)**, and served as its chairman from 1923 to 1929, from 1932 to 1933, and again from 1936 to 1958. He was also the ETTA's president from 1927 to 1931 and 1958 to 1966.

H. Roy Evans (President from 1967 to 1987)

Second ITTF President. Evans began to play table tennis in Wales at the age of 20 and had been an ITTF secretary until he took the helms of the ITTF in 1967. With his efforts, table tennis became an Olympic medal event in 1988.

In **1987**, Evans lost the presidency in a 65-39 vote, and was named ITTF honorary president. The men's World Cup - Evans Cup, was named after him.



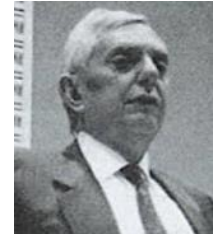


Ichiro Ogimura (President from 1987 – 1994)

Third ITTF President. Ogimura began to play table tennis at 16 and had won 12 world championship titles for Japan. He had been an ITTF executive board member and vice president before he was voted as president in 1987. Thanks to Ogimura's efforts, South Korea and North Korea sent a historical joint team to the 1991 world championships. He served until his death in 1994.

Lollo Hammarlund (President from 1994 to 1995)

Fourth ITTF president. Hammarlund had coached the Swedish team from 1958 to 1970 and was voted ITTF president in 1995. He died of an illness in October 1995. He was known as a fair sport leader.



Xu Xinsheng (President from 1995 to 1999)

Fifth ITTF president. Xu was a key player in the Chinese men's team which won the 26th, 27th and 28th world team championships and later became head coach of the Chinese team. Xu, who had been Chinese vice sports minister, and ITTF vice president, took the ITTF presidency in 1995. He proposed the increase to the 40mm ball in an aim to make the sport more of a spectacle. He didn't seek re-election in 1999. He still holds the presidency of the Chinese Table Tennis Association.

Adham Sharara (President from 1999 to 2014)

Sixth ITTF president. Born in Cairo, Sharara started to play table tennis at 10 and joined the Canadian national team in 19. He was voted as ITTF president in 1999. Under his leadership, the 40mm ball came into use and the 11-point scoring system was adopted. Sharara will also be remembered as the president who introduced the change to plastic balls.



Thomas Weikert (President from 2014)

Seventh ITTF president. An active player in the German Bundesliga in the 1980's, Weikert acted in various roles for the German Table Tennis Federation, serving as its President from 2005 until 2014. He also served as ITTF vice-president from 2013 to 2014.

Weikert is an advocate of Table Tennis X-treme as a method of expanding the participation in the game. So far, this has gained little traction.

ALTERCATION LEADS TO DISQUALIFICATION

At the **2003** World Championships in **Paris**, the Men's Doubles match between **Kim Taek Soo & Oh Sang Eun** from **Korea** and **Cheung Yuk & Leung Chu Yun** from **Hong Kong** was ended early. At 6-5 in the seventh game, a point awarded to the Koreans was disputed, leading to a long discussion involving players, coaches and officials.

When the coach of the Hong Kong team man-handled an official, he was shown a red card and ejected from the court. When the altercation continued, the Hong Kong team were disqualified. Hong Kong lodged a protest, but this was rejected and the Koreans were awarded the match.

And the moral of the story? *Aggression leads to ejection.*

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

Sporting venues rely on sporting events. The more people playing the various sports offered in the venue, the more money they make. Most venues are configured for multiple sports. As you can clearly see when playing at MTTA, you are playing on a basketball court. Even large venues like **MSAC** will share space between sports. The wish of the operator is to have these spaces used as much as possible. But things can go wrong.

In February, the **2017 Butterfly West Coast Open** tournament scheduled to be held in **Livermore, California** had to be cancelled. When the 33 tables arrived by truck to be set up, they found that a volleyball tournament was already underway in the same space. It seems that the venue operator had double-booked for the weekend.

With no other space at the centre available, and with less than a day before matches were scheduled to start, the organisers had no time to find an alternative venue. Cancelling was their only option.

Many of the **244** players from all over the U.S. had already started arriving in Livermore only to find there was no tournament for them to attend. There was no blame placed on the organisers of the tournament, and the venue admitted to the booking error. With the cost of unneeded travel and accommodation for many players, lawsuits are already being filed.

I'm sorry, but as far as I'm concerned, the event organisers cannot absolve themselves of blame. A simple phone call to confirm the booking may have given them the time they needed to either find a different venue or cancel the event before players had started their travels. I'll keep you informed of any further developments.

APRIL TOURNAMENTS

April has some very important tournaments in some great locations. From the **1st** to the **6th**, the **Oceania Hopes Challenge** will be played in **Tweed Heads**. This tournament will feature some of the best young talent in the region. Following on from that, the **8th** to the **11th** will see the same venue holding the **ITTF Australian Junior & Cadet Open**.

If you're after a sunny escape, you may want to travel to **Suva, Fiji** to catch the **ITTF Oceania Para Regional Championships** from the **11th** to the **16th**. With the World Para Team Championships only a month away, this tournament will feature the best Para players from the Oceania region all vying for a place in the big dance. If you can't get there, you should check out the ITTV web channel for live streaming.

Also in **Suva**, the **ITTF Oceania Junior Championships** will be held from the **13th** to the **16th**, and the **ITTF Oceania Cup** will be on the **15th** and **16th**.

April is also busy on the local scene. On **Saturday** the **1st**, Mornington will be hosting the **Mornington & Peninsula Senior Open**, followed the next day by the **Junior Open**. Head on down and ask them why they don't have a *Court 1*.

Sunday the **9th** is the **Dandenong Veteran's Open**, with the following weekend being the **Dandenong Junior Open** on the **15th**, and the **Senior Open** on **Sunday** the **16th**.

On **Saturday** the **29th** Albury/Wodonga will be running their **Junior Open**, followed on **Sunday** the **30th** with the **Senior Open**.

As we've run out of days, there will be no April tournaments after that.

ON THE WEB

Ever felt like a night out at a fancy club, with music, lots of neon and a well-stocked bar, but were drawn by the need to play table tennis as well?

It's coming to Melbourne and I'll tell you about them soon, but to see how the Americans do it, have a look at www.spin.com. These are huge clubs in major cities (**Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Austin** and **Toronto**) where you can meet and party, all within metres of over a dozen table tennis tables, most in constant use. They even have very plush private rooms with top class tables that you can book for your party and not be disturbed.

They are owned by **Susan Sarandon** (yes, *that* Susan Sarandon), so it's a fairly regular occurrence to see some top sportsmen or Hollywood celebrities having a hit right beside you. Don't forget your credit card, though. Booking a table for an hour starts at **\$29** and goes up to **\$49** in peak times. That's before you add on food and drinks.

Getting in to the clubs is a lot easier than getting into the country, so if you're over there call in for a friendly hit. In the meantime, check their website.

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

Are you a member of our facebook page? Search for **Melton Table Tennis** on Facebook and join in our conversations. Don't forget, you can find our web page at www.meltontabletennis.com.au Make us your home page.

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

To contact Glenn O'Dea, email glenn.odea@bigpond.com

To contact Matt Camilleri, email matthewpcamilleri@hotmail.com

If you would like to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please email meltontabletennis@gmail.com with the Subject of Unsubscribe.