



CROSS THE NET

Melton Table Tennis

December 2016

OUR PREZ SPEAKS, SPRING WRAPS, STAR AWARDS, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

In the last edition for 2016, we hear from our President in our version of the Queen's Christmas broadcast, review the results of the Spring Season, preview the upcoming Star Awards and discuss the relative virtues of serving and receiving.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Another year has rolled by and our Association continues to prosper with stable numbers and a competition that I believe is the strongest it has been for several years. Some new faces in A Grade and the steady improvement of others has ensured a healthy competition. The pennant seasons have been very competitive at both the team and individual level which demonstrates the good work of the match committee in team selection and the grading of individuals. It's a difficult task and there will always be disappointments but having a consistent selection process has been important to ensure an even and therefore more enjoyable competition. Congratulations to all those who have enjoyed success over the year.

Challenge matches were conducted between our Association and the Sunbury and Werribee clubs. Success against Sunbury after many years was achieved, but we received a comprehensive defeat by Werribee. Thank you to those players that represented MTTA in these challenges and also to the generous hospitality provided by the host clubs.



While the Committee has worked well as a team, there are two Members that I would like to especially thank. **Matt Camilleri** is always first to the hall to open up and last to leave after closing. His work to ensure Thursday nights run smoothly by completing score sheets, organising fill-in players, and getting matches started on time is invaluable. Matt has also been responsible for entering all competition results to maintain the ladders and individual rankings. The publishing of our newsletter is eagerly awaited by members and now by a much broader audience, every month. **Glenn O'Dea** does an excellent job in compiling club information and many other interesting stories from the wider table tennis community.

A new fund raiser was introduced this year with the opportunity to conduct a **Bunnings sausage sizzle**. The event not only raised money to help with the Association finances, but also provided the opportunity to promote the Association. Flyers were distributed and feedback from shoppers was positive. Another sausage sizzle will be conducted on **Sunday the 18th of December**, so we will be looking for more volunteers to help on the day.

We were all saddened to learn that one of our Association stalwarts, **Craig Archman** had suffered a stroke earlier in the year. Craig, a long time player and committee member was a key driver to have our Association represented at Country week. His rehabilitation has been long with a few setbacks along the way but his release from hospital is due in early December. We wish Craig well and hope to see him around the club in the near future.

As I do every year, I want to ask that Members keep an eye out for potential new players that may be interested in joining us. Family, friends, workmates or school mates are all welcome to join or participate socially. The 2017 season will commence mid-January and I hope to see you all back. Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Chris Blake - President

SPRING SEASON RESULTS

Another great year has come to an end at Melton Table Tennis with the Spring season wrapping up. Congratulations to the following players on a great finish to the year.

The **A Grade** Grand Final saw **Paul Denis, Brad Gibson** and **Larry Hallinan** with **Marc Camilleri** filling in triumph over **Daniel Heaney, Steve Schoen** and **Naim Chdid**.

B Grade had **Matt Magro, Harry Newell** and **Akram Ansari** taking the chocolates over **Clint Daulo, Jim Scott** and **Tom Wojton** with **Jesse Fletcher-Gass** filling in.

The battle for honours in **C1 Grade** went to **Syed Ahmed, Sarah Lappin** and **Ross Lappin** over **Geof Walker, Callum Mawson** and **Will Corluka**.

C2 Grade winners were **Jason Craddock, Angela Cricchiola** and **Lauren Barge**, victorious over **Russell Mackay, Anna-Marie Jurkovic** and **Chris Ribbons**.

Leading Player for **A Grade** was **Paul Denis**. **Shannon Camilleri** took out the **B Grade** Leading Player award. **Syed Ahmed** won the Leading Player for **C1 Grade**, with **Christy Koppman** taking the award for **C2 Grade**.

Our congratulations go to them all.

PRESENTATION NIGHT

This Thursday night is the Melton Table Tennis Presentation night taking place at **Q-Lounge**, 20 McKenzie St Melton. Located just behind the *Golden Fleece Hotel*, this will be a great night where we look back over our 2016 seasons, praise the winners and commiserate with the rest of us.

This year will see over **100** trophies handed out to some very deserving players. The **Leading Player** and **Club Champion** awards will be presented by our very special guest speaker who we hope will enthral and inspire you.

If you haven't got your tickets yet, contact Matt or Glenn as soon as possible to reserve your place at our end of year knees-up. At just **\$15** a head, this is a night not to be missed.

SIZZLE SIZZLE

Melton Table Tennis will be holding a sausage sizzle at **Bunnings Warehouse** on **Sunday the 18th of December**. The last time we ran this it was a roaring success, raising money as well as awareness for our club and our sport. We will again be handing out flyers promoting the club as well as sausages prepared individually by the loving hands of head chef, Chris Blake and his team of eager assistants.



If you're available to come down and ~~eat lots of sausages~~ assist on the day, it would be greatly appreciated. We will be sending out reminders closer to the time, but feel free to put your hand up to assist.

2016 ITTF STAR AWARDS

The annual awards ceremony for the best of the best in the table tennis world will be held in **Doha, Qatar** on Thursday the 8th of December. This date has obviously been chosen to give them time to steal all of the good ideas from the MTTA awards the week before.

There are a range of awards up for grabs. The Male and Female players of the year are chosen by popular vote, as is the award for the best rally of the year. Other awards are chosen by a panel of judges and include the Male and Female Para player of the year, Coach of the year, the Breakthrough award, and an award for Fair Play.

The **Male Table Tennis Star** has as its nominees **Quadri Aruna** from **Nigeria**, **Fan Zhendong** and **Ma Long** from **China**, and **Jun Mizutani** from **Japan**.

The **Female Table Tennis Star** nominees are **Ding Ning** from **China**, **Miu Hirano** and **Mima Ito** from **Japan**, and **Kim Song-I** from the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**.

A new award this year is the **Breakthrough Star** award. The nominees are;

Team England made up of **Liam Pitchford**, **Paul Drinkhall** & **Sam Walker** who reached the semi-finals of the World Team Championships for the first time in 33 years, as well as the Rio 2016 Olympic Games Quarter finals for the first time for Great Britain.

Tomokazu Harimoto from **Japan** who started the year ranked 10th in the world amongst under 18 players, and by July was ranked number 1 after an historic win at the Japan Open Under 21 event at just **12 years of age**.

Miu Hirano from **Japan**. At **16 years of age**, Hirano became the youngest ever Women's World Cup Champion, and the first ever Japanese player to win the title.



So 2 Japanese female players are up for the gong as the Star player, and both of them are just **16**. Will one of them win? Probably not. Don't forget that this award is by popular vote, and the popularity of Ding Ning in China is huge. But imagine if Miu Hirano won both the Breakthrough award and the Star award in the same year. Or if a 12 year-old took out an award at a major awards ceremony. Would they toast him with a glass of milk? *I've said it before. There is an awful lot to like about Japanese table tennis.*

We'll have a full wrap-up of the event with the details of all winners in the first edition of **Across The Net** next year.

2017 SEASON AT MTTA

With the growth in membership and interest in our game, we will be providing more opportunities to play in 2017.

The first season, traditionally a short 5 week season with some breaks to spread it out will be changed to a full 10 week season. With three 10-week seasons, finals and club championships rounds, this will give us **39 weeks** of competition as well as the challenge matches with Sunbury and Werribee.

The club will again be opening at 7:00pm for set-up with the aim of starting matches by 7:30pm. **January the 12th** and **19th** will be practice and grading nights, with the main season starting on **February the 2nd**. We look forward to seeing all of you back for another great year.

ON THE WEB

Each year at this time I stress the importance of practice. Footballers get a short break and are quickly back into training. Why don't we do the same?

The break over the summer is a perfect time to develop new skills and improve those parts of your game that were lacking this year. It's also the best time to upgrade your equipment so that you can get use to any changes before the new season starts. In his book, *The Art of War*, **Sun-Tze** stressed the importance of preparation by saying, "**The battle is over before the battle has begun**".

Preparation and practice are the keys to playing better, so here are a couple of web sites you should definitely check out.

For all your equipment needs, go to www.affordablett.com.au and search to find the best Christmas present. All of us who have dealt with **Rob Katsipis** can attest to his patience and knowledge in getting you the best combination of blade and rubbers to suit your game. Affordablett also has a wide range of accessories such as clothing and carry bags which make a perfect gift, especially if it's for yourself.



To assist with your training, go to www.pingskills.com. Run by **Alois Rosario** and **Jeff Plumb**, this site features all you will need to improve your skill level. Sign up to receive regular emails and podcasts. If you like what you see, consider taking their *Premium membership* for access to even more video's and regular training and practice tips.



American football coach **Vince Lombardi** said, "**Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.**"

Chase perfection

Are you a member of our facebook page? Search for **Melton Table Tennis** on Facebook and join in our conversations.

A DIFFERENCE IN ATTITUDE

Table Tennis is thought of by many as a Chinese game. As regular readers will no doubt be aware, table tennis was invented by the English in the 1880's. The Chinese have simply taken an English game and made it their own. Even the name, originally mis-heard, has been adopted and modified by the Chinese to put their own spin on a friendly English after-dinner game.

When the game was first introduced into China, the name of "Ping-Pong" was heard as "ping pang", giving the parlour game a very different feel. In Chinese, "ping" is the word given to the sound of a bullet being fired from a gun, and "pang" is their word for the sound of a bomb exploding. The Chinese characters for "ping" and "pang", when super-imposed over each other create the Chinese character for "soldier".

乒

Ping

乓

Pang

兵

Soldier

Even the opening shot in every point has been altered by the Chinese. Whilst we call that shot a "serve", the Chinese considered this sounded like a gift to the opponent, and instead they call it a "launch".

So from its very first introduction into China, this friendly little game was seen as a game of tactics, power and control in the same way as a military campaign is seen. In fact, the Chinese national teams of the 1950's and 1960's were all given copies of *Sun-Tze's* book, "**The Art of War**" to read for its tactical information.

When the terms used around a game have a military feel, you can imagine that the attitude to the game will be very different.

THE THINGS YOU REGRET SAYING

In his 1914 book, "*America, through the Spectacles of an Oriental Diplomat*" the former Chinese Minister to the USA, **Wu Tingfang** wrote, "*Western sports such as ping pong have been introduced into some mission and other schools in China, but I much doubt if they will ever be really popular among my people*".

I wonder what Wu would think of his people now?

DECEMBER TOURNAMENTS

None (English), **niemand** (Afrikaans), **asnje** (Albanian), አንድም (Amharic), لا شيء (Arabic), ոչ ոք (Armenian), heç kim (Azerbaijani), **НИХТО** (Belarusian), না (Bengali), **nijedan** (Bosnian), **нито един** (Bulgarian), **cap** (Catalan), 没有 (Chinese), **mancunu** (Corsican), **nijedan** (Croatian), **zadny** (Czech), **ingen** (Danish), **niets** (Dutch), **mitte utski** (Estonian), **ei mitaan** (Finnish), **wala** (Filipino), **aucun** (French), **keine** (German), **pa gen yonn** (Haitian), **kekahi** (Hawaiian), אף לא אדם (Hebrew), कोई नहीं (Hindi), **egyik sem** (Hungarian), **ekkert** (Icelandic), **tak satupun** (Indonesian), **aon cheann** (Irish), **nessuno** (Italian), なし (Japanese), គ្មាន (Khmer), 없음 (Korean), **netu** (Kurdish), **neviens** (Latvian), **niekas** (Lithuanian), **tiada** (Malay), **xejn** (Maltese), **kahore** (Maori), **ямар ч** (Mongolian), **zaden** (Polish), **nenhum** (Portuguese), **nici unul** (Romanian), **никто** (Russian), **leai se isi** (Samoan), **nikto** (Slovak), **ma jiro** (Somali), **ninguno** (Spanish), **teu sahiji bae** (Somalian), **hakuna** (Swahili), **ingen** (Swedish), **Yok** (Turkish), **knong ai** (Vietnamese), **na fydd unrhyw un** (Welsh).

SERVE OR RECEIVE ?

To serve or not to serve. That is the question. You may find this hard to believe, but serious studies have been done on this. University-type serious. Serious mathematical-type and psychological-type studies. Done by the type of people who always got picked last when the sports teams were selected.

It's a very interesting question. At our club the problem doesn't exist. As we alternate umpiring between the two teams, the first serve in a match is taken by the player from the opposing team. But at other clubs or in tournament play, one player will get to decide whether to serve or receive first. So what's the value in having a choice? Well, if you are going to totally dominate your opponent or they are going to totally dominate you, there's not much difference. But if the game will be close, that's another matter.

The assumption is, of course, that you are confident with your serves. If not, *stop reading now*. Go and practice and come back when your serves have improved.



A good start to a game is critical. In a report published on *ChinaDaily.com* it was stated that since the introduction of the 11-point scoring system, **85%** of games are won by the player getting to 5 points first. So if you are confident that you can win on your serve, serving first should give you an advantage. It will also mean that you will serve first in the **1st**, **3rd** and **5th** games of the match. A quick start in the 5th game of a close encounter could make all the difference.

If the game goes to **8-8**, you have the critical 2 serves and the chance to go to 10-8. And if the match goes to **10-10** in the 5th game, you will have that first critical serve to push home an advantage.

So you should serve first, then. Or should you? Receiving first can play mind games with your opponent. Before the first game, winning the right to serve and then tossing the ball to your opponent can cause them to have that moment of confusion you need to throw them off their game. They may not be as confident of their serve as you are with yours, which might allow you to get that vital 3-point break at the start of the game (more on that in a later edition). Forcing your opponent to serve first places more pressure on them, as the server is usually expected to win those points. It signals to your opponent that you aren't afraid of what they can throw at you.

So you should receive first, then? Well, the jury is still out on that one. But it does mean that you get a look at your opponent before they've had a chance to properly warm-up to the game. Players are more likely to make a mistake early in the game, and it's better if your opponent makes a mistake on their serve rather than you making a mistake on yours.

And let's not forget that your other option is to choose which end of the table to start at. This can be of benefit in a tight match. And in a weird twist, you should choose to start at the end you least prefer. For the first four games, you will spend roughly equal time at each end, but if the last game is close, when you change ends mid-way through the game, you will be playing the critical final points at the end you prefer.

The final conclusion of all these studies is that it really doesn't matter much whether you serve first or second. My conclusion is that if I'd said that at the top of the page, you could have saved a whole lot of time by not reading this.

WITH APOLOGIES TO CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

2016. *What fun we had.* Melton Table Tennis has again ended the year a stronger and better club than at the same time last year.



Across The Net has expanded its reach far beyond our club, with readers as far afield as **England, Germany, France, America** and **Ecuador**.

This year we have covered topics as diverse as the retirements of **Jean-Michael Saive, Michael Maze, Jan-Ove Waldner** and **William Henzell**. I ranted for a couple of months about the service rule and how it is being ignored at the top level. We talked about the over **260 million** combinations of rubbers, and reviewed the great table tennis at the **Australian Open** from MSAC.

Our interview with the spider-loving rock star **Trevor Hirth** proved very popular, as did articles on coaches and the rhythm method, and my proposal that Chinese table tennis was on the decline. We looked back on the careers of **Stellan Bengtsson, Ruth Aarons** and **Richard Bergmann**, and we explored the little-used **Expedite** rule.

The aim of this newsletter is to inform, enlighten and amuse. I hope you feel that these aims have been met and I will try to continue this through 2017 and into the future. I wish each of our friends and supporters the Christmas you truly deserve and a prosperous New Year. Stay safe.

**'Twas the night of the finals, and all through the hall
Not a player was playing, 'cause they'd broken the ball.
The manufacturer said they'd been made with great care,
But still they broke open, which caused much despair.**

**The supplier had said that he's not to blame,
But the balls kept on breaking which was really a shame.
The players had frustration that just kept on growing
And all through the hall the expletives were flowing.**

**They needed an answer, a fix, a solution.
Balls made, perhaps, by nuclear fusion?
They turned to the ITTF for reaction
'cause this problem with plastic was quite a distraction.**

**The players said, "Please let's have celluloid back.
This plastic keeps breaking when we give it a whack."
And the answer came down from the leaders on high;
"Just suck it up boys, bad luck and goodbye".**

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

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