



CROSS THE NET

Melton Table Tennis

December 2018

Edition 51

SPRING WRAP, STAR AWARDS, MY HERO, DATA SECURITY AT THE NORTH POLE, AND MUCH MORE

In a bumper last edition for 2018, we review our year, praise the winners of our Spring Season, preview the upcoming Star Awards, take a coach's view of how to limit mistakes, talk about a little giant, congratulate a new man at the top, and inform you of why to be careful with letters to Santa.

SPRING SEASON COMES TO A CLOSE

Last Thursday night saw the Grand Finals of our Spring season being played. And what a great night it was. All matches were of a very high standard, with some being very close. Our congratulations go to the winners.

A1 Grade saw **Michael Louey, Steve Schoen** and **Mina Gerguis** beating **Marc Camilleri, Chris Addis & Chris Blake** filling in for **Andy Stewart**, 5 matches to 4.

A2 Grade saw **Connor Ziday, Graham Huggett** and **Richard Dias** triumphing over **Ed Menegol, Geoff Alexander & Mena Faik** by 6 matches to 4.

B Grade saw **Jesse McKinnes, Steve Batten** and **Josh Dias** taking the honours over **Mohammad Islam, Dillon Ziday** and **Glenn O'Dea** by 6 matches to 2.

In **C Grade** it was chocolates for **Simon Reich, Estela Dickie** and **Beatrice Grinham**, and boiled lollies for **Bailey Hermit, Josiah Rasenberger** and **Jason Craddock** filling in for **Jack Jensen** by 6 matches to 4.

The Leading Player for the season in **A1 Grade** was **Michael Louey** in a very close contest from Marc Camilleri. **Geoff Alexander** won the **A2 Grade** Leading Player, ahead of Connor Ziday. Geoff didn't lose a match all season. **Steve Batten** took out the **B Grade** Leading Player, narrowly ahead of Brian Barker, and **Simon Reich** just got home for the **C Grade** Leading Player ahead of a chasing pack which included Jack Jensen and Estela Dickie.

A QUICK REMINDER

Don't forget that you can still have a hit with us. **Thursday the 6th of December** will be a fun night at MTTA. No pennant matches, but we will be open for anyone to come along and have some fun playing against whoever you like. It's also a perfect opportunity to get some coaching tips from some of our top players. Bring a friend with you and have some fun.

2018 - ANOTHER GREAT YEAR

When you see a club bursting at the seams with players enjoying their games, you know that the it is in a healthy position. It's always a good feeling watching matches in all grades showing the improvement of players throughout the club. In his article last December, Chris Blake spoke of a "changing of the guard" at the top level of the club, predicting that the younger players would be challenging the established upper echelon of A grade. His prediction has come true and this has pushed our A grade to greater heights.

Pennant seasons in all grades have been very spirited with some incredibly close competition at both the teams and individual levels. The Match Committee work tirelessly to ensure that the grades are as even as they can. It's important to stress the amount of work that goes into the team selections to make all grades as fair and as enjoyable as possible.

If success is measured by the trophies collected during a year, MTTA have done extremely well. At the annual Victorian Country Championships, MTTA came home as champions in three divisions (C1, D2, and E1), as well as with 4 individual awards to Chris Addis, Milan Lukavic, Connor Ziday and Matt Magro.



We also managed to lift the shield at our annual challenge match with Sunbury Table Tennis, taking the night by 8 tables to 2. This is the second time in three years we have managed to grab the award, and our biggest winning margin for many years. Unfortunately, our annual match against Werribee didn't happen this year, so we will need to wait until next year to see how much we've improved.

While our club is in a healthy financial position, extra funds never go astray, and our Bunnings Sausage Sizzles continue to top up our coffers as well as providing an important means of getting the club and our sport recognised in the local community. We are always looking for assistance at these events, and it would be good to see a few additional helpers when these days come around.

Moving forward, with growing numbers on Thursday nights we may have the opportunity of opening for a second night each week. The committee is constantly seeking ways of improving our playing experience, and every avenue to help the club prosper is being investigated. With a dedicated push for Junior Development we will do whatever we can to promote this area of the club.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the committee for their work this year. The committee roles are volunteer positions and these people give generously of their time to make Melton Table Tennis a better place to be.

As always, we encourage you all to come back and join us again next year, and we encourage you to tell your family and friends about our club and about our sport. Bring them with you when we open again in the New Year and help our club grow.

Stay safe over the holiday period, and we look forward to seeing you again in 2019.

Glenn O'Dea - President

PRESENTATION NIGHT

Thursday the 13th of December 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 2018 seasons, praise the winners and commiserate with the rest of us.



And how many table tennis clubs can boast their own band? We can. ***Ping Pong***, comprising **Simon Reich** on keyboards, **Josh Dias** on guitar, and **John Batty** on drums will be providing some great music for us on the night.

This year will see over **100** trophies handed out to some very deserving players. The **Club Champion** awards will be presented by our very special guest speaker who we know will inspire you with her story. We will be providing a sit-down meal at this year's event. As such, we will need to have bookings in as soon as possible to allow for proper catering. Soft drinks and alcoholic beverages will be available to purchase from the private bar. At just **\$20** a head, this is a night not to be missed. Contact **Glenn** or **Matt** if you haven't booked already.

2018 ITTF STAR AWARDS

The annual awards ceremony for the best of the best in the table tennis world will be held in **Incheon, South Korea**. This glittering event will be held on **Thursday the 13th of December**. I'm not sure if anyone will be turning up to attend this, seeing as it's on the same night as our Awards ceremony, but good on them for trying.

The **Male Table Tennis Star** has as its nominees **Timo Boll** from **Germany** (pictured left), **Hugo Calderano** from **Brazil**, **Fan Zhendong** from **China**, and **Tomokazu Harimoto** from **Japan**.



The **Female Table Tennis Star** nominees are **Ding Ning** (pictured right) and **Wang Manyu**, both from **China**, **Mima Ito** from **Japan**, and **Li Qian** from **Poland**.

The **Breakthrough Star** Award will be chosen from **Bernadette Szocs** of **Romania** (pictured right), **Manika Batra** of **India**, and **Jang Woojin** from **Korea**.



The **Female Para Star Award** will be chosen from **Xue Juan** (Class 3) of **China** (pictured left), **Seo Su Yeon** (Class 2) of **Korea**, and **Kelly Van Zon** (Class 7) of **The Netherlands**.

The **Male Para Star Award** will be selected from **Florian Van Acker** (Class 11) of **Belgium** (pictured right), **Fabien Lamirault** (Class 2) of **France**, and **Jordi Morales** (Class 7) of **Spain**.



The **ITTF Star Award for Coach of the year** will be decided between **Jorg Rosskopf** (pictured left), coach of Timo Boll and Dimitrij Ovtcharov, **Massimo Costantini**, coach of the **Indian national team** at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, and **Ulf 'Tickan' Carlsson**, coach of the **Swedish national team**.

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

RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO MISTAKES

Tom Lodziak is a coach from **Cambridge, England**, who also writes very interesting articles. Tom also has his own youtube channel with instructional videos, and he produces a free monthly newsletter. You can find more information on all things about Tom at www.tabletenniscoach.me.uk. Tom has given us permission to re-print the following article which a number of you may find useful.

We all make silly mistakes and unforced errors when playing table tennis. But there is often a big difference between how players respond to making a mistake.

Some players dwell on the mistake and start making lots more mistakes. Other players seem unaffected and bounce back stronger.

How can we be more like the player who responds positively to mistakes?

In this blog post I share a simple mental trick to help you react better when you make a mistake during a match.

Dwelling on mistakes

I have a player I coach who can do a training drill brilliantly nine times in a row. But on the tenth attempt, he messes up. He will then say out loud "I can't do this". I can see the self doubt in his facial expressions. His body becomes tense. And inevitably he will start making more mistakes.

The same happens in a match. He will be playing well and winning. Then he makes a mistake and his self-doubting mind goes into overdrive. The grip tightens. The fear of losing increases. His game unravels. He loses the next few points.

What causes this playing melt-down? Usually the answer is the mind. Or, more specifically, focusing the mind in a counter-productive way.

When this player makes a mistake, he will dwell on what he did wrong. His mind will flood with all the other times he has done it wrong. He will tell himself "I just can't play this shot. I always mess it up". His grip will tighten. His muscles tense up. His shots become rushed and jerky. And guess what? He messes up even more.

All of the negative thinking becomes self-fulfilling. He tells himself he can't do. He visualises other times he messed up. So he messes up again.

Switching your mindset

This is actually quite common. Many players experience these feelings. But if this is something which happens to you, you need to do something about it. You need to switch your mindset. We all make mistakes, but mistakes don't have to destroy your confidence.

Here's a mental trick you can try...

- When you make a mistake in a match, pause for a moment.
- Very quickly analyse why you made the error, but don't dwell it.
- Instead, visualise how the shot should be played.
- Fill your mind with examples of when you have played the shot correctly.
- Physically re-enact how the shot should be played.
- Give yourself a brief positive instruction on what to do next time.

Let's flesh this out with a personal example...

I have bad habit of reaching forwards when attempting to play a backhand drive or backhand topspin. I am very aware of this. This habit often resurfaces in a match when the score is close. How do I deal with it?

Firstly, I don't get stressed. It's no big deal. I pause and maybe walk away from the table.

In a fairly detached way, I recognise I made the mistake by reaching forwards to the ball.

I then start visualising how I want to play the shot – letting the ball come to me, keeping a loose wrist and elbow and snapping through the ball.

If I want more positive reinforcement, I think about the times in matches I have played this shot well.

I may even shadow play the shot, to remind my body of what to do.

And I will give an instruction to myself to “wait for the ball, stay loose and snap”.

All of this just takes a few seconds – the time available between points.

Focus on doing it right

The key to all of this is focusing the mind on **how to do the shot** you missed, rather than dwelling on what you did wrong.

By focusing the mind in on how to play the shot, you increase the likelihood of actually doing the shot correctly the next time.

You can use this approach in training sessions, competitive matches – every time you play. You can quickly teach your mind to respond to mistakes in a positive and productive way.

Of course, this simple mental trick won't solve all your problems and suddenly turn you into the best player in the world. But there is absolutely nothing to gain from having a negative, self-doubting mindset. This will get you nowhere.

So give it a try. Respond positively to making mistakes. Believe in yourself. Show everyone how you can play table tennis!

A GIANT IN ACTION IF NOT IN SIZE

Everybody has one. Someone you can look up to; admire; aspire to be like. I have many. I am constantly impressed by people who strive against the odds to improve not only themselves, but those around them. Those who see the obstacles in their path as challenges to be faced and beaten. Giants in their field. **Ogi** was such a man.

Ichiro Ogimura was born in Tokyo in 1932. Having lost his father to tuberculosis when he was 2 years old, his mother struggled to keep them fed, often working 2 jobs until late in the evenings. Because of this, Ichiro had to learn to fend for himself.



In 1948, his first year at Metropolitan Tenth Junior High School, students petitioned the headmaster to buy a table tennis table. The headmaster originally rejected the request, saying that table tennis was a “girl’s game”. Eventually he relented, and a table was placed in the school’s basement. Ogi was hooked. He started spending as much time as he could practicing and playing at the many table tennis clubs which were springing up around Tokyo. He also spent much of the allowance given to him for food on playing table tennis as well, regularly having a single bread roll for his daily meal. Eventually the owner of the practice hall started preparing his evening meals which he ate while still practicing.

Graduating high school, Ogi moved to the **Tengaku Nihon University’s** Faculty of Arts, Department of Films. His studies here would lead to one of the first table tennis training films and, eventually, would aid in the rise of the Chinese dominance of modern table tennis.



Training was always paramount to Ogi’s success. He constantly pushed himself harder, striving to get the best out of his body, regardless of the cost. As well as his hours at the table each day and his daily **10km** run, he added frog-jumping with a **40kg** weight on his shoulders for **4km** each day to increase his leg strength. His game was based around speed, endurance and smash, smash, smash. He was always saying, “*Score 51 times out of 100 and I am a winner*”.

The “Fifty-One Percent Doctrine” was a playing style invented and popularised by Ogimura. It encouraged an aggressive playing style whereby a smash shot would be risked by a player if they believed they had a 51% or higher chance of winning the point with it. This style was later adopted by world champions such as **Zhuang Zedong** from **China** and **Stellan Bengtsson** from **Sweden**, to both of whom Ogimura served as a coach and mentor.

He placed huge emphasis on accurate serving. Standing a pen on its end, he would try to knock it over 100 times in a row. Once he had accomplished this, he tried the same feat blindfolded.

Years of practice paid off and he won the **1954 All-Japan National Championship**, and was subsequently selected to play for Japan at the **1954 World Championships in London**. A practice partner once said of him, “*I admired how he set himself a goal so ambitious that he couldn’t hope to achieve it and then gave absolutely everything in pursuit of it.*”

He returned from London with gold medals for the **Men’s Team** events and the **Men’s Singles Championship**. Just five years and seven months after taking up table tennis as a sullen, skinny schoolboy, he’d become one of the national heroes of post-war Japan. He followed this with the **1956 Men’s Singles** title, as well as **Men’s Doubles** titles in **1956 & 1959**, **Mixed Doubles** titles in **1957, 1959 & 1961**, and **Teams** event gold medals in **1955, 1956, 1957 & 1958**.

Ogimura and fellow Japanese 2-time World Champion, **Toshiaki Tanaka**, created a training film entitled *“Japanese Table Tennis”*. A copy of the film eventually made its way to China where it was studied in detail by the Chinese national team.

When Ogimura toured China in the early 1970’s, Zhuang Zedong, himself later a three-time world champion, told Ogimura, *“Japanese Table Tennis was the perfect textbook for us. Watching you and Mr. Tanaka practice made us realise that you do not swing a table tennis racket with your arms; you hit the ball with your feet.”*

Far from finished with a career in table tennis, Ogi went on to coach in **Sweden, China** and the **USA**. When questioned about coaching other countries he replied, *“Playing for one’s homeland is all well and good, but it implies a rejection of the other countries. Can human beings live together in harmony like that?”*

Such was his impact that the former Swedish National Coach, **Anders Thunstrom** said, *“Swedish table tennis owes him everything.”*

Also interested in developing equipment specifically for table tennis, he worked with Japanese shoe manufacturer **Koyo Bear**, to develop one of the first ever table tennis shoes. In England the shoes were marketed and branded by **Joola**. Koyo Bear are still active in making table tennis shoes.



Always a diplomat, he worked with **Zhou En-Lai** to bring **China** back into world table tennis competitions after the cultural revolution, and was able to negotiate for **North** and **South Korea** to enter combined teams in the 1991 table tennis World Championships.

Ichiro Ogimura was elected ITTF President in 1987, a post which he held until his death from lung cancer in 1994.

“What matters,” he said, “isn’t extraordinary ability but extraordinary effort”

NEW HEAD COACH

Table Tennis Australia has announced that the former Head Coach of Table Tennis Ireland, **John Murphy** has accepted the role of Australian Head Coach (able-bodied).

Conn Higgins, Table Tennis Ireland’s Performance Director, stated, *“While we regret John’s decision, we understand this is a great opportunity for him and wish him the very best as head coach of table tennis Australia and thank him for his wonderful contribution to Irish table tennis.”*

Prior to coaching, John was a 5 times Irish table tennis national champion.

John, 32, will be based in Melbourne, but will be travelling to all parts of Australia to look after the athletes under his control.

We welcome John to Australia and wish him all the very best in his new role. Who knows... maybe we can entice him to come down for a hit one Thursday night.



BIG STAKES - SMALL COIN

As I've been saying, table tennis in Europe is huge. If you still haven't worked out how big it is, go back to last month's article on **Borussia Dusseldorf** to find out how big some of their clubs and competitions are. And like the major soccer competitions, the teams travel large distances to compete in tournaments. Like across a continent distances.

In the third round of the **European Table Tennis Union Women's Cup**, Dutch team, **TTV Lybrae Heerlen** travelled to **Istanbul** to play Turkish team **Fenebahce Spor Kulubu**. The Dutch side had a resounding 3 matches to 1 away victory, and had every right to feel confident with the return leg at their home court.

But someone forgot to tell the Turkish girls about what was supposed to happen. Fenebahce Spor Kulubu returned the favour with their own 3 matches to 1 away victory. And this is where things got complicated.

After the 2 legs of the contest, TTV Lybrae Heerlen and Fenebahce Spor Kulubu were tied on matches, on games, and even on points. Tournament regulations were studied, and it was discovered that the match had to be decided by the toss of a coin.

Can you imagine, two teams of players and their support staff, each battling for a win away from home at a venue **2,500kms** from their own city and supporters, having to wait until the match referee tosses a coin to find out whether or not all that effort was worth it?

The coin toss came down in favour of the Dutch team, leaving the girls from Turkey to travel home disappointed. **Elena Timina** of **TTV Lybrae Heerlen** said, *"After almost five hours of playing in Istanbul and Heerlen there is no difference between both teams. I feel sorry for this unsatisfactory defeat for Istanbul, but I am very happy to reach the fourth round in the ETTU Cup"*.



The picture on the right shows the TTV Lybrae Heerlen team showing sympathy for Fenebahce Spor Kulubu.

TOP PLAYERS REMAIN TOP PLAYERS

Looking back at the top of the World Rankings from the start of the year sees some change, but all-in-all, the song remains the same. Of the Top 10 Men from the January rankings, there have been some interesting ups and downs.

Ma Long (China) drops from **7th** to **11th**, **Simon Gauzy** (France) dropped from **9th** to **20th**, and **Kenta Matsudaira** (Japan) dropped from **10th** to **30th**. Moving the other way, **Lee Sangsu** (Korea) has jumped from **14th** to **7th**, **Hugo Calderano** (Brazil) has moved up from **17th** to **9th**, and **Tomokazu Harimoto** (Japan) continues his climb, moving from **11th** to **6th**. The largest movement amongst the top players was **Masaki Yoshida** (Japan), who slipped from **24th** in January to **75th** in November.

Those on the way down in the top level of Women include **Feng Tianwei** (Singapore) who moves from **3rd** to **11th**, and **Doo Hoi Kem** (Hong Kong) who dropped from **9th** to **14th**. New entries into the top 10 are **Ding Ning** and **Liu Shiwen**, both from China. Ding jumped from **21st** to **2nd**, while Liu moved from **24th** to **6th**.

I thought that the biggest loser would have been **Sakura Mori** (Japan) who dropped from **17th** to **99th** until I discovered that **Shan Xiaona** from Germany had made the startling move from **23rd** to **156th**. Wow.

DATA-SHARING AND YOUR PROTECTION

At MTTA we take your interests seriously. When you share any information with us, we make every effort to protect your data. What needs to be passed on to our controlling bodies is passed on, but apart from that, your data with us is secure and will not be shared. The same cannot be said of some other organisations.

I am aware that at this time of year many letters are written to Santa Claus by children from all around the world. Some may even be written by *your* children. These letters contain personal details which your child may not think about when writing to Santa, but which you may not want revealed. What happens when your child's letter reaches the North Pole? Is that information stored and maintained safely, or is it sold off to other agencies?



I have taken the liberty of checking, on your behalf, the fine print of the Terms and Conditions of **Kringle & Co.** and have discovered the following.

- ***Santa's Privacy Policy:*** At Santa's Workshop, your privacy is important to us. What follows is an explanation of how we collect and safeguard your personal information.
- ***Why Do We Need This Information?*** Santa Claus requires your information in order to compile his annual list of who is Naughty and who is Nice and to ensure accuracy when he checks it twice.
- ***What Information Do We Collect?*** We obtain information from the unsolicited letters sent to Santa by children all over the world listing specific items they would like to receive for Christmas. Often these letters convey additional information, such as which of their siblings are nitwits. The letters also provide another important piece of information — fingerprints. We run these through databases maintained by ASIO, the FBI, CIA, Interpol, MI6, and Mossad. If we find a match, it goes straight on the Naughty List.
- ***What Do We Do with the Information We Collect?*** Sharing is one of the joys of Christmas. For this reason, we share your personal information with unaffiliated third parties including, but not limited to, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, the Halloween Goblin hiding under your bed, Honest Politicians and other mythical creatures.

2019 AT MTTA

Will we be back next year? *You betcha.* Better than ever, Melton Table Tennis will resume playing with our bats and balls, still at the same venue, and still on **Thursday nights at 7:00pm**. Dare I say it? Same bat-time. Same bat-channel. (*Sorry*).

In 2019 we will be running a **5-week Summer season**, followed by **10-week** seasons for **Winter** and **Spring**. Our first night back will be **Thursday the 10th of January** for Practice and Grading, with the Summer season kicking off on the **24th of January**.

Unfortunately, we will again be facing a closure of the venue for six weeks during May and June, but we are investigating alternatives to keep you at the tables.

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

DECEMBER TOURNAMENTS

The **ITTF Junior World Championships** will be held just up the road in **Bendigo** from the **2nd** to the **9th**. Why not spend a day enjoying a pleasant drive and top it off with watching some of the future stars of our game? Representatives from **20** countries will be participating for the big prizes.

The finals of the **ITTF World Tour** which will be played from the **13th** to the **16th** in **Incheon, South Korea** are inching closer (*see what I did there?*).

Locally, apart from the Junior World Championships there is not a lot happening. Well, when I say not a lot, I mean significantly less than that. Lower your expectations a little. A little more... Lower... Have you hit "nothing" yet? Good. You got it.

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.

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