



ACROSS THE NET

Melton Table Tennis

October 2016

AGM, SUNBURY CHALLENGE, RIO PARAS, COACHES & THE LONGEST POINT

In this edition we look at your new committee, discuss the success of our Para's in Rio, talk about new coaches and the new coaching rule, and look back at a single point which lasted almost as long as some Italian Prime Ministers.

AGM AND YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

The Annual General Meeting of Melton Table Tennis was held on Thursday the 22nd of September and showed once again that our club is healthy and progressing.

In his address to members, President Chis Blake pointed out the fact that membership has been on the rise over the past few years, and also praised the fact that our proportion of junior and female members has markedly increased.

All committee positions were declared vacant, and elections for office-bearers were held. Your new committee is :-

President	Chris Blake
Vice-President	Glenn O'Dea
Secretary	Geof Walker
Treasurer	Larry Hallinan
Match Secretary	Matthew Camilleri
General Committee	Dean Camilleri
General Committee	Steve Batten
General Committee	Graham Huggett
General Committee	Craig Archman

These people represent *your* interests. If you have any ideas to assist in the successful running of the club, please feel free to approach any of them to have your suggestions discussed.

AND FROM OUR APPAREL SHOP

Melton Table Tennis club shirts and shorts are available to purchase from the club. These are brand new shirts and shorts, still in the original packaging. The shirts have no names printed on them and are perfect as a spare for those hot, sweaty nights during summer.

Shirts are available in Small, Medium, Large and 2X-Large. They are on sale for the bargain=basement price of \$15. Shorts are available in Medium, Large, 2X Large and 3X Large, and will cost only \$20 per pair.

A Melton Table Tennis shirt and short ensemble would make an excellent Christmas present. If interested, please speak to Matt or Glenn.

WE DID IT !!!

For the first time in many, many years Melton Table Tennis has won the **Melton–Sunbury Challenge** match. Over recent years, Sunbury have had the wood over Melton, taking the shield by 8 tables to 1 in 2014, and by 9 tables to 1 in 2015.

Last Thursday night Sunbury hosted the 2016 challenge. On a night where the rain on the roof nearly drowned out Matt Camilleri's cries of anguish, Melton players excelled taking the shield by **7 tables to 3**.



With outstanding efforts right across the stadium, it was difficult to decide on which table to watch, but it would be hard to go past our boys on Table 3. The team of **Andy Pais, Steve Schoen** and **Brad Gibson** took the honours by **9** matches to **0**. In control all through the night, Brad had to battle cramps but managed to push through this to play his part in a great victory.

Team 10, consisting of **Brett Woods, Will Corluka** and **Katia Corluka** filling in at the last minute, were also dominant taking the chocolates by **8** matches to **1**.

The boys of Team 5, **Chris Blake, Naim Chdid** and **Larry Hallinan** also excelled taking to honours by **7** matches to **2** against some very accomplished opposition.

One of the most exciting matches of the night was the final match on Table 1. **John Weightman, Matt Camilleri** and **Paul Denis** managed to come from behind to tie their competition at 4-all. The responsibility of the final match fell on Paul Denis. In a very exciting match, it was even at 2 games all and 9-9 in the fifth. Paul held his nerve and clinched the victory 11-9, allowing Table 1 to triumph by **5** matches to **4**.



In past reports on previous challenges, we were congratulating two or three players who had managed to win all three of their matches on the night. This year that feat was accomplished by **10 Melton players**.

With fine performances from all around the stadium, Melton Table Tennis can be very proud of the efforts of all our players.

We thank our Sunbury hosts for a marvellous night of table tennis, where new friendships were made and old friendships were rekindled.



RIO PARA WRAP

The Rio Paralympics have wrapped up with success for Australia in table tennis, but more on that later. The athletes representing Australia in table tennis all performed extremely well. Just to make an event like this takes determination and drive well beyond the capability of most, and the “gang of five” were a credit to their dedication to the sport.

Although bowing out of the competition after the preliminary rounds, both **Barak Mizrachi** (Class 8) and **Danni Di Toro** (Class 4) gained valuable experience from the competition. Rather than looking at this as the end of a dream, both can hold their heads high and use this as the first stepping stone to Tokyo in 2020.

In the Singles competition, **Andrea McDonnell** (Class 10) had a rough time, facing the world number 1 in her class, but performed well despite the loss. **Melissa Tapper** (Class 10) made it through to the quarter finals but, unfortunately was defeated at that stage.

In the **Women’s Team (6-10)** event, Milly and Andrea combined to get through to the semi-final, only to come up against the might that is China. Going down 0-2 put the girls into the Bronze medal play-off where they had to face 2 highly rated players from Brazil in front of a stadium full of Brazilians (why can I not type that without smiling). In a match that could have gone either way, Milly and Andrea were defeated 2-3, but deserve our praise for getting that far.

And then we come to Sam. Competing in his first Paralympic Games, **Sam von Einem** (Class 11) did what no Australian in the past 32 years has managed to do. In his quarter-final match, Sam beat a Korean opponent before facing another Korean in the semi-final. Battling back from being 0-2 down, Sam won the match 11-9 in the fifth to progress to the final.



Sam came up against **Florian van Acker** from **Belgium** in the gold medal match. The World Number 1 and current European champion in Class 11, van Acker is a formidable opponent. In a match that went the full distance, van Acker won 11-8, 16-18, 11-13, 11-5, 11-8. Although defeated, Sam was not beaten.

Interviewed after the match he said *“I’m happy with silver, I have no complaint. I reached the final. It is the best I have ever played against Florian. I was concerned before the match that I might be beaten very easily, so I’m pleased I put up a good show and it was not a whitewash!”*



This was Australia’s first Paralympic table tennis medal since Terry Briggs won silver in 1984.

Win or lose, this group of 5 together with their coaches and support staff took Australian Para table tennis to the world and deserve our heartfelt thanks and congratulations.

Well done to all, and bring on Tokyo 2020.

THE NEW COACHING RULE AND THE START OF ANOTHER REVOLUTION

Coaching comes in many forms. To most at club level, it usually comes in the form of giving yourself a stern talking to under your breath. If you're lucky, it may mean some encouraging words from a teammate.

Once you get to tournament level, you may have the services of a coach, but the times that the coach can advise you has been limited. Rule 3.05.01.03 stated, "***Players may receive advice only during the intervals between games or during other authorised suspension of play, and not between the end of practice and the start of a match***".

On October 1st this year, all of that goes out the window. The new rule is as follows: "***Players may receive advice at any time except during rallies and between the end of practice and the start of a match***".

Coaches are now allowed to give advice to players at any time during a game. *How?* Can they call out instructions? Hand signals? Semaphore? Very little detail has been given on this, but the rule is now in place.

Does this mean that the coaches can call instructions to players on what type of serve to use? Coaches and players who speak a language not understood by the opposition would certainly have an advantage. And does this make the players simply robots doing the bidding of a controller positioned outside the playing arena?

Is this in the best interest of table tennis? At least one governing body has concerns about the affect this rule will have on play. The USATT, governing body of table tennis in the United States, have rejected the new ITTF rule for all tournaments except ITTF sanctioned ones, like the U.S. Open. This was decided on at their recent board meeting after considerable discussion. I haven't heard of any other country taking this type of stand.

The Americans were partially upset by the fact that a governing body has made a decision which affects them without their having a say in it. *Isn't that how the American Revolution started?*

AND SPEAKING OF COACHES

The **2017 Australian National Coaches** were named last week, and we are pleased to pass on the information to you here.

Jens Lang has relinquished his position as Men's Head Coach to take up a position with the **Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Organising Committee**, and we wish him well in that role.

Taking his place as the **National Men's Head Coach** will be former head coach of Fiji Table Tennis (and original Melton Table Tennis member) **Brett Clarke**.

The **National Women's Head Coach** position has been taken by **Miao Miao**.

Alois Rosario will continue in his role of **National Para Head Coach**, and will be assisted by **Aleks Jakubczak**.

National Boys Head Coach will be **Tatsuya Hidaka**, and **National Girls Head Coach** will be **Jenny Langridge**.

These positions will all commence in January next year and we wish all of these coaches much success in their roles.

COME IN, TABLE 9. YOUR TIME HAS EXPIRED

I recently watched a game between 2 stoic defenders, and as I stood there, transfixed by the little white ball moving ever more slowly from side-to-side, my mind started to wander. It wandered far away from the table and out of the hall. Eventually it found its way to the **1936 World Championships in Prague**.

In the early 1930's, it was fashionable to play a very defensive game and simply wait for your opponent to make a mistake. This was causing concern amongst the ruling bodies at the time, as crowds were getting bored watching this type of game and spectator numbers were falling (and those who stayed to watch were falling asleep). This culminated in Prague in 1936 when **Alex Ehrlich** from **Poland** came up against **Farkas Paneth** from **Romania**.

Paneth was a defensive blocker and chopper who refused to ever play an attacking stroke. Ehrlich was one of the finest attackers of his time who had a particular dislike of the defensive game, and considered that it was ruining the sport. To prove his point, he decided to play Paneth at his own game, declaring that he would let his hand drop off before he played an attacking stroke.

The crowd started off smiling, understanding what Ehrlich was doing, but soon they started to shuffle their feet. The booing and howling soon started as the players tapped the ball over the net "*like a pair of arthritic grandmothers*" and it finally went quiet when the crowd of more than two thousand was reduced by boredom to a couple of dozen. But the point went on... and on.... and on.

After the point had passed the **30 minute** mark, ITTF president, **Ivor Montagu** who was watching from the front row leaned forward and pleaded with the players to speed up the game. He admitted that Ehrlich had made his point, but the Pole refused to attack. Ehrlich called for his teammates to set up a chess board on a nearby table and started to call out his moves while continuing to return every delivery from Paneth. After **45 minutes** the umpire had to be replaced during the point, complaining of a stiff neck. After an **hour** Ehrlich called for lunch, and ate a cheese baguette while the point went on.

Montagu stood and called for an immediate meeting of ITTF board members to try to resolve the problem. To his horror, when he returned to the arena after the meeting, the same point was still underway.

Eventually, Ehrlich hit a shot which caught the top of the net, pivoted briefly, and dropped onto Paneth's side. Ehrlich won the first point of the match after **2 hours and 12 minutes**. It is estimated that the rally contained approximately 8,000 shots. Ehrlich cruised to victory with the rest of the match completed in less than 10 minutes.

Ivor Montagu, later commented that those who simply pushed and chiselled were "*as table tennis players a menace that must be humiliated, despised, sent to Coventry, driven out of public life, if table tennis is to survive*".

This single point and the meeting which took place while it was being played was the catalyst for the first of various rule changes over the next 80 years. Almost immediately, the height of the net was lowered and a time limit of **20 minutes** per game, to a maximum time of **1 hour and 45 minutes** for a match was introduced.

The first time this rule had an effect on international play was in the very next World Singles Championship between **Ruth Aarons** of the **USA** and **Gertude Pritzi** of **Austria** when the match was stopped after 1 hour and 45 minutes with both players being disqualified and the Women's Singles title declared vacant. In 2001, this ruling was overturned and both players were awarded the Gold medal for the match.

The rule has been refined over the years and now (in plain English) is this:

After 10 minutes of play, if at least 18 points have been completed (9-9, 10-8, etc), the game will continue as normal.

After 10 minutes of play, if 18 points have not been completed, the game will be interrupted by the umpire. Play will then re-start with players getting one serve each until the end of game. Each time the receiver plays a shot, the umpire or an assistant will count aloud so that both players can hear. If the receiver can make 13 returns, they win the point.

All subsequent games in the match between those 2 players will be played using the expedite rule from the start.

This rule is designed with one result in mind; to make the server responsible for attacking and trying to win the point. If they simply defend for too long, the receiver will be awarded the point automatically. At club level you will probably never see this happen. Even at the top level it is very rare.

Does it work? Based on the fact that you don't see too many straight-out defensive players, it seems to work. **Is it fair?** Well, it's probably fairer than my idea of smothering them in honey and tying them to a termite mound. **But is it as much fun?**

OCTOBER TOURNAMENTS

The only tournament worth mentioning for the month is the **National Veterans Championship** which will be held in **Sydney** from the **14th** to the **22nd**.

Motorists travelling up the Hume Highway should be aware of slow moving mobility scooters during that time.

ON THE WEB

Want a laugh? Just for the hell of it, go to **Google** and type in **Table tennis memes**. You'll be presented with stacks of pictures, some great, some funny, of people in the art of table tennis. Here's one of my favourites. I think this says a lot without the need for words.

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**. Make us your home page.



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