



ACROSS THE NET

Melton Table Tennis

September 2017

Edition 38

WINNERS, CHAMPIONS, BUNNY BURROWS, AND AN INTERNATIONAL AUSSIE

In this edition we preview our AGM and our Spring Season, congratulate Winter winners and Club Champions, compare other sports to table tennis, and check out the history of a great player who may have been ineligible to sit in parliament.

SPRINGING INTO ACTION

Spring has sprung. The flowers are out. Let's go and whack some balls about. With apologies to **Ogden Nash**, we launch into a new season, both inside and outside the hall. And with the new season of competition at MTTA comes some other important items to attend to.

The **7th of September** sees us kicking off the Spring Season. This is usually our best season of competition each year, as the weather warms and bones stop creaking.

Prior to the commencement of Round 2, on **Thursday the 14th of September**, Melton Table Tennis Association will be holding its **Annual General Meeting**. This is your opportunity to get engaged in the running of the club. If you have the drive to be involved, and the time to dedicate to the club, you should consider putting your name forward for a position on the committee.

Did you know that Melbourne is the only city in the world to have a holiday *because of* a horse race? Other cities have races on holidays, but in Melbourne the race came first and then the holiday was declared because of it.

And we have another holiday dedicated to a sporting event as well. Friday the 29th of September is the annual **AFL Grand Final Eve** holiday. To take advantage of this, on the evening of **Thursday the 28th**, Melton Table Tennis will be involved in the annual **Melton / Sunbury Challenge**. After many long years of defeats at the hands of our opponents, last year Melton took the title by 9 tables to 1. Let's try to do it again this year. The matches will be held at the Sunbury Table Tennis Club, and transport can be arranged if necessary. If you are interested in representing MTTA at this event, please have your name added to the list.



So let's all get involved in what the club has to offer and make September a great month at MTTA.

WINTER IS DONE

The first Thursday in August saw the Grand Finals of the Winter season being played. And what a great night it was. Our congratulations to the winners.

A Grade saw **Michael Louey, Shannon Camilleri** and **Dean Camilleri** beating **Chris Addis, Gavin Jackson & Naim Chdid**.

B Grade saw **Mitch Braini, Steve Batten** and **Brett Woods** taking the honours over **Geoff Alexander, Graham Huggett** and **Jesse McKinnes**.

In **C Grade** it was chocolates for **Gareth Roberts, Anna Jurkovic**, with **Deb Schoen** filling in for **Katia Corluka**, and boiled lollies for **Christina Camilleri, Ahmet Halil** and **Lauren Barge**.

CLUB CHAMPIONS CROWNED

Another fascinating year of club championships has been played and won. The annual three-week festival has seen new champions crowned.

On an evening that saw the return of Matt “Grizzly” Camilleri, the **2017 Singles Champions** were decided. A high-powered night saw barriers crashing in A-Grade on more than one occasion. In the final it was **Michael Louey** who defeated **Shannon Camilleri** to be crowned **2017 A-Grade Singles Champion** in a great match.



After some marathon games in the lead-up, the **B-Grade Club Championship** was won by **Clint Daulo**, taking the title by accounting for **Graham Huggett**.

The **2017 C-Grade Club Champion** is **Russell Mackay** who fought off **Jason Craddock** to take the honours in the final.

The **Handicap Champion** for 2017 is **Shannon Camilleri** (starting on 12) who beat **Will Corluka** (starting on 20). This year's Handicap Championship was a closely-fought event, with **10** of the **58** matches going to **30-30**, and **14** more being decided by **3** points or less.

Graham Huggett specifically wanted to be mentioned for his effort of beating both **Lawrence Wu** and **Gavin Jackson** in the first round. In the interest of fairness and journalistic integrity, I should mention that Graham didn't progress beyond the second round. Please offer him your shoulder to cry on.

On a night that was colder than a mother-in-law's kiss, a hardy bunch attended the Doubles Championship and Shootout Championship. **Doubles Champions** this year were **Chris Blake** and **Connor Ziday** who defeated **Dean Camilleri** and **Sarah Lappin**.

The **Shootout** was won by **Chris Blake** out-firing **Zain Ali Khan** to win by a very narrow margin (obviously).

Congratulations to these people who have become part of MTTA history.

TUNNEL TABLE TENNIS

After our successful experiment with Ultimate Table Tennis a few months ago, we will be trying out another variation on the game. This Thursday night, the **31st of August** at our practice and grading night, we will be setting up for **Tunnel Table Tennis**. A sort of cross between table tennis and squash, Tunnel Table Tennis still uses 4 tables, but with 2 of them left in the folded position to form walls on the sides.

This event should see balls bouncing at angles not normally expected. But enough about the players, the game should be exciting as well. It guarantees some fast-paced and confusing action. Don't miss it.

THE RABBIT HOLE

*This article was written by **David Anderson** from **Georgia** in the U.S., but I think it's relevant for players all around the world, and I am publishing it here as written.*

Within the past 8 months, I have been descending further and further down the table tennis rabbit hole. Prior to November 2015, I was slapping the ball around after work for about a year with a \$5.00 Walmart racket, not knowing anything about the sport of table tennis. Now I'm getting coaching twice a week and compete in a local league. I bought my own table, robot, and custom racket. I watch professional players play, and read table tennis books.

However, recently I have found myself having less fun playing the sport. This became painfully obvious this past Tuesday when I lost all of my matches in my local league. Was I not having fun because I was losing? I would be lying if I said that didn't play a role, but I can think back to many instances where I was having fun while still losing.

I've come to realize I was not having fun because I was distracted by all the extra baggage that league comes with. Points, ratings, win/loss ratio, internal and external expectations, etc... Thinking about all of these things made playing stressful and frustrating, which resulted in me playing poorly. This fact becomes more clear when I think back to the same night, but before league started. I was warming up in open play and losing to a better player. Yet, I was having fun, I was relaxed, and I was still playing good. 30 minutes later, league started and I was worried about my match results, and I was tense and just not having fun.

This experience has allowed me to re-evaluate my goals and remind myself why I play table tennis. I play to have fun. I'm not a professional, I don't do this for a living. Moving forward, I'm no longer going to concern myself with winning or losing, my rating, my opponents rating, etc... Instead I'm going to focus on enjoying the sport while still playing my best and continuously improving.

THE RISING SUN WHITEWASH

At the recent **Seamaster Bulgarian Open**, there were no **Chinese** players in the draw. The Women's side of the draw however, contained **79** players, **16** of whom were **Japanese**. In a great effort that I'm not sure has ever been previously achieved, **all 16 Japanese** women made it through to the **Round of 16**, which meant that the Quarter-Finals, Semi-Finals and Final were **all-Japanese** matches.

For the record, **Kasumi Ishikawa** beat **Mima Ito** in the final, but it's Japanese table tennis we should be congratulating.

THE CHINA RATIO

Is there a perfect body shape for table tennis? If there is, I'm pretty sure it's not my shape. In fact, I'm not sure that there is a sport suited to my body shape. Possibly darts, but certainly not table tennis.

In a recent article on the ITTF website, **Wade Townsend** wrote about a topic which deserves closer (and slightly twisted) scrutiny. Wade was writing about the players competing at the World Championships in **Dusseldorf**, with particular interest in their height and weight.

It seems that the Chinese Men's team at the championships had an average weight of **73.5kg**. This was significantly more than their Japanese opponents who had an average weight of just **61kg**. Most of the other Asian competitors were about **10%** lighter than the Chinese players as well. So does this mean that bulk is better for a table tennis player? No. But what it did highlight is that there seems to be a ratio of height to weight which is common to many of the top players.

Current world number 1, **Ma Long** is listed as being **175cm** and **71.5 kg**. This gives him a ratio of **0.41kg** per centimetre of height. *The China Ratio*. And it's not just Ma Long who had this ratio. Recent champions **Werner Schlager**, **Jan-Ove Waldner**, **Jorgen Persson**, **Wang Liqin**, **Ryu Seung-Min**, and **Wang Hao** all had a ratio of 0.41kg per centimetre.

And this got me thinking. Does the China Ratio also apply to other sports? Yes, I know we're comparing apples with oranges, but you all know that something as obvious as that has never stopped me before.

Collingwood high-flyer, **Jeremy Howe** manages to get his **190cm**, **88kg** frame well off the ground, but his ratio is **0.46kg** per centimetre.



Australian cricket captain **Steve Smith** is a bit closer. At **176cm** and **80kg**, his ratio is **0.45kg** per centimetre. If Steve went on a crash diet he might drop the **8kg** of weight needed to make the ratio, but I think I'd rather see him in cricket whites.

Melbourne ruckman, **Max Gawn**, who stands at **208cm** and **111kg**, has a ratio of **0.53kg** per centimetre. Max would need to either drop **26kg** or grow another **60cm** in height to meet the China Ratio.



Aussie Formula One racer, **Daniel Ricciardo** has the exact opposite problem. Standing at **180cm**, but weighing in at just **64kg**, his ratio is only **0.35kg** per centimetre. He obviously keeps trim by drinking low calorie champagne from his shoe.

So, there you are. I think that this conclusively proves that a ratio of 0.41kg per centimetre of height may not be perfect for a footballer, cricketer, or racing driver, but is the perfect ratio for a table tennis world champion. No need to worry about endless practice, training, skill sessions, or anything like that. Just hit that magic ratio and then apply to the ITTF to have your name engraved on the trophy.

At least, I *think* that's how it works.

FROM BUDAPEST TO SYDNEY

"May you live in interesting times" is considered to be an ancient Chinese curse. **Michael Szabados** lived in interesting times.

Born in **Budapest, Hungary** in **1912**, Miklos Szabados was born to a father who was a flour-mill manager and a mother who was a professor of languages and history. Life should have been comfortable and educational; and it started that way.

Receiving his first table tennis set on his thirteenth birthday in **1925**, Miklos soon became infatuated with the game. Within 2 years, he was winning tournaments around Budapest and was included in the Hungarian National team. The player he beat in that first local tournament was none other than his future national teammate **Viktor Barna**. Miklos became known for his clever footwork, good defence, fierce forehand and effective long game.

Attending his first World Championship in **1928**, he was part of the successful **Hungarian Men's Team**, taking his first Gold medal. The Hungarian Men's Team gave him **4** more Gold medals in **1930, 1931, 1933 & 1935**.

In **Singles** at World Championships, Miklos came up against some of the greatest players of all time. **1929** saw him take the **Silver** medal, beaten by the Englishman **Fred Perry**, later of Wimbledon fame. **1931** saw him taking the **Gold** medal over his friend and countryman, Viktor Barna. Barna should have won, but admitted he had been out until the early hours of the morning drinking with friends and wasn't prepared for the match. In **1932**, Miklos took **Silver** to Barna's Gold, in **1933** he took **Bronze** behind Barna and fellow Hungarian teammate **Laszlo Bellak**, and in **1934** he took **Silver**, falling to Barna yet again.

It was in Doubles, however, that Miklos Szabados shone. In **1929, 1930, 1931 & 1932** he teamed up with his good friend Viktor Barna for **4** consecutive **Men's Doubles Gold** medals, and the pair backed these up with **2** more in **1933** and **1935**.

His record in **Mixed Doubles** was no less impressive. Winning **Gold** with **Maria Mednyanszky** in **1930, 1931** and **1933**, the 4-peat was only interrupted by a **Silver** medal in **1932** when they lost to Viktor Barna and **Anna Sipos**.



And while all of this was going on, Europe was crumbling around him. He began studying engineering at the **University of Berlin**, but, being of part-Jewish descent, he fled to Paris in 1933. He coached table tennis players in that city while still competing for his native Hungary from his exile in France. Fearing the worst, he moved to Britain in 1936.

As was popular at that time, Miklos and fellow Hungarian champion, **Istvan Kelen** did a tour in 1937 playing exhibition matches and promoting the game. Their tour took them to **China, Japan, South Africa, South America, India, Malaya, Java, and Australia**.

Sponsored by the **New South Wales Table Tennis Association**, they played exhibition games in **Adelaide** and **Melbourne**, then competed in the Australian championships in **Sydney**. They won every match, with Szabados defeating Kelen in four sets for the singles title, and they won the doubles in straight sets.

Szabados emigrated to Sydney after the tour and opened a table tennis club in Pitt Street. He married in **1941**, and they had a son, **Sandor**. Miklos was called up by the **Allied Works Council** and served as a mess orderly in **Alice Springs** during 1943 and 1944. During this period, he used his time to play and teach table tennis to his colleagues at the Works Council and play bridge with the Northern Territory administrator's wife. As a result, he played more bridge than anything else as he was already a **NSW Bridge champion**. Taking Australian citizenship in **1944**, he became known as Michael.

Michael won the singles titles at the **Australian Table Tennis Championship** in **1950** and **1952**, and won doubles in **1950** and mixed doubles in **1955**. He continued to run table tennis academies and to coach. Two of his students, **Cliff McDonald** and **Michael Wilcox** won Australian singles championships.

Michael Szabados died of pneumonia on the **12th of February 1962** in Sydney, just short of his 50th birthday.

He was posthumously inducted into the **International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame** in **1987**, and into the **International Table Tennis Federation Hall of Fame** in **1993**.

The **Szabados Award** is presented each year by Table Tennis Australia to the best Junior player. A fitting tribute to someone who lived in *interesting times*.

SEPTEMBER TOURNAMENTS

Not much this month. The **National Senior Championships** will be held in **Adelaide** from the **23rd** to the **30th**. I've always said that if I could choose a place to die it would be Adelaide, because then the transition from life to death would be hardly noticeable.

Locally, the **Mornington Veterans Open** is on the **9th & 10th**.

ON THE WEB

I was looking at a site the other day, and found myself slightly disappointed by what wasn't there.

The site is www.sportsflu.com.au. It covers table tennis, tennis and badminton with video and articles submitted by fans from around the world, most of which I haven't seen on other sites.

And my disappointment with the site? They recently published an article listing the **15** most handsome players in table tennis, and my name wasn't there. I'm sure they'll publish a revised list when they see the photo I've sent them.

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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