



Across the Table

Newsletter of Table Tennis New Zealand

2 June 2008

Issue 3



From the Executive Director

Two big disappointments for May

NZOC deciding not to change their criteria and include Karen Li in the team to Beijing. Playing the best table tennis of her life in completely outclassing our Aussie neighbours in the Olympic Qualifying Tournament, this was not deemed good enough. To have any chance Karen had to get her world ranking down to around 50. A big ask when the cost of travel to overseas tournaments is huge, not considering the training required to compete well. New Zealand players have the ability to succeed, but smaller sports in NZ do not have the finances to help players train and compete overseas.

The cancellation of the World Junior Table Tennis Championships, which was to have been held at North Shore in December, was a big disappointment for all table tennis players. The opportunity to see in action the top 100 or more highly ranked players, many of whom will feature in top world rankings in future years was something we missed out on. The decision to cancel came down to lack of sponsorship. While TTNZ had a professional marketing and sponsorship company involved, the present economic climate played a big part.

Championships

Last newsletter I commented on some ideas for National Championships. I would have felt that even a couple of tongue in cheek comments may have got a response. It was great to get 5 responses. I thank the people who spent time to give their views on events. Any response is healthy for the sport and allows change to happen.

Affiliation

This is not about fees, but I accept it pays a big part in why some people affiliate and others don't.

You firstly affiliate so you can belong to an association and gain all the benefits that the association offers, perhaps representing the association and possibly New Zealand. Of course there are some who want all the benefits without belonging or paying. Do we actually want to be associated with these people?

Others have never been asked and never been given the opportunity, not aware that more than a social club night exists.

Some of the advantages of affiliating are listed in the Membership section on website. There is also a very good in article on "The Cost of Table Tennis" by John Kiley in the same section.

What I am going to suggest here is that associations (some have already) move up with the times and allow free affiliation while adopting a "User Pay" system for all events held. ie, Incorporate TTNZ fees into the cost of all Association events and TTNZ & Association fees into the cost of all club activities.

I know of at least one association who divides the Affiliation fee (both TTNZ and local) among all inter-club teams. Imagine new players being asked for \$50-\$80 individual team entry.

Giving free affiliation ensures players supply their contact details, no chasing players for fees, no arguments, less waste of volunteer time, no receipts to write out. Add a dollar or so a night to each inter-club, business house, schools, hall hire, tournaments etc. and fees are paid no problem (simplistic - there are always some who try not to pay - in most cases they easily afford it).

Funding agencies are also now asking for accurate databases of players. So everyone playing table tennis should be affiliated. I mean everyone.

Make sure you are on your association database.

Ron Garrett

North Island Championships

Auckland 16-20 July 2008

Entries Close 12 June 2008

Forms available at:

<http://www.tabletennis.org.nz/nationalevents.htm>

Table Tennis New Zealand is proud to be sponsored by:

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Stag - Ball Suppliers

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Pacific Sports & Community Trust

The Southern Trust

The Service.

by Alan Moore

Every rally in a match commences with a serve, so why is it so difficult for players to perform this often repeated activity to the letter of the ITTF laws. Over the years many changes have been made to the laws relating to the serve in order to make sure that rallies are longer than just one hit. The intent of all the changes has been to make the serve returnable and as fair as possible.

The laws today are not difficult to understand, the main problem is that most players do not access the laws in order to read them. To make it easy for everyone here is a brief run down of the essential elements of a good service.

- The service commences with the ball resting freely on the open palm of the free hand above the level of the playing surface and behind the end line.
- The ball is then intentionally projected upwards from the open palm of the free hand (this may not apply to an athlete with disability and the umpire may relax the laws to cater for such a player).
- The ball must be projected near vertically and rise at least 16cm after leaving the free hand.
- The ball must be struck as it falls.
- The server shall not obstruct the ball with any part of his/her body and nothing the server wears or carries shall obstruct the ball from the view of the opponent and the umpire.
- The ball shall be struck so that it touches first the server's court and then passes over or around the net, without touching it, and then touches the receiver's court.

Pretty simple really, so why is it so hard for players to comply?

If the umpire calls fault when a player fails to make a legal serve why do players get so upset? If the umpire fails to see an edge ball or does not call "let" at the appropriate time a player will get annoyed, but expects that the umpire will ignore an illegal serve.

Is this reasonable?

There is no doubt that many players think that their service action is legal. Why not review your service and see if it complies with the laws? As there are usually a variety of serves in most players' repertoires check them all. The challenge to all readers of this article is for you to think hard about whether you are playing the game fairly and in compliance with the laws in every facet of your game. No-one thinks well of a player who consistently cheats, e.g. by throwing the ball backwards onto his racket or hiding the ball from view till the last possible moment.

If you are umpiring make a point of watching the serve of each player in the match and draw to their attention any shortcomings in their action. A warning is usually all it will take to ensure a player makes a real effort to play fairly and to comply with the laws. If the serve is very obviously a fault then no warning is necessary and a point should be awarded to the opponent.

A full copy of the Laws and Regulations of Table Tennis is available from the TTNZ website located on the Umpires page.

Play hard, play fair and enjoy every match win or lose.

Speed Glue and Frictionless Long Pimple Ban

In regard to Gregg Davey's interesting article about speed glue and frictionless long pimple ban it might be helpful to clarify a couple of statements.

The ITTF stopped approving glues last year. They also advised players to cease using glues containing volatile organic compounds (VOC). This was in May 2007. It was a double-barrelled move, to protect the ITTF from any responsibility, but also not to change anything for the players until after the Olympic Games for seniors and January 1 2008 for juniors (world junior champs).

The new testing regime has already begun for ITTF junior tournaments and for senior events it will start on September 1.

Re rubbers - there is NOT such a list of banned rubbers on the ITTF website. The ITTF only publish a list of approved rubbers which gets updated and can be found on its website. Gregg's comments are his interpretation of what will happen.

Re referees – this sometimes happens when inexperienced referees and perhaps experienced referees handle local events. It would not happen at an ITTF event.

Re ratings – the ITTF have recently instigated a penalty system for players who forfeit matches and hopefully TTNZ will do the same.

Joachim Kusche

**THERE WAS ONCE A PLAYER
NAMED DWIGHT,
WHO COULD HIT A BALL FASTER
THAN LIGHT.
HE SMASHED IT ONE DAY,
IN A RELATIVE WAY,
AND IT LANDED THE PREVIOUS
NIGHT.**

Where to for Table Tennis?

from **Murray Holdaway** Chairman Table Tennis Manawatu

Following are quotes taken from a recent report in the sports section of the Manawatu Standard:

- “Change or Perish – that is the blunt message being delivered to New Zealand's ailing clubs”
- “the trend is not unique to New Zealand – membership is falling world-wide; but we have decided we cannot idly stand by and watch clubs go to the wall”
- “we estimate at least 60% of New Zealand's clubs are in financial difficulty”
- “the average age of club members nationwide is about 60 and clubs are crying out for younger members”

It may surprise many to find that the report was quoting Bill McGowan, Chief Executive of NZ Golf. Golf receives massive exposure and support from television and sponsorship yet their problems mirror those of Table Tennis. Moreover, TT competes with them and many other sport and leisure options for young members.

To answer the question, how do we compete, we must start by challenging ourselves, whether we are administrators, officials or players, and agree on what our roles are and what we are trying to achieve. This is critical if good decisions are to be made for our sport's future, because while we must change, the changes must move us in the right direction and for the right reason.

For example: “Why do we organise and run our major tournaments? Is it:

1. to provide the players with the opportunity to play at top level?
2. to find winners to engrave their names on our trophies?
3. to provide a pinnacle for the season?
4. to provide an opportunity to profile our sport?
5. to provide an opportunity to raise additional funding?

I suspect different sectors of our sport would give different answers – players, might answer 1 & 2. I hope administrators would answer either 4 or 5, because their responsibility is to make decisions in the sport's long term interest, and to me, profile and funding are critical to our future. Players may find it unfair but I think they are in fact the tools that administrators use to promote the game. A difficulty for a minor sport such as ours is that generally administrators are also players, and in many cases are in an administrator's role by default.

However, if TT is to compete in attracting young players into our sport, administrators must not only understand their role, they must also provide leadership to take the game forward. Players and officials must also understand the need for change, and support the measures taken by administrators. Recently at the Veterans Australia v NZ test match held in Palmerston North, the organisers, Tim and Sarah Seaholme's plan was to hold up games so the new games on each table could be announced and the overall score updated, for the benefit of spectators. A number of players and officials protested, giving reasons such as “this has never been done before” and “we'll get cold between games”. From an administration point of view, the event was being run and organised for the benefit of the spectators who had paid to be there, with the hope they enjoyed the experience and see TT as a genuine sporting option for themselves, their families or friends and spread the word. If players and officials have to do things differently to achieve that, then so be it.

Cricket provides a good example of this. One-day cricket, played under lights was introduced against the wishes of the players, but if cricket had relied on Test Matches as its only form it may have died by now or at the very least retained only a very minor following. The paying public wanted something quick and entertaining so the players had to adapt. Now they are further adapting to 20/20 matches. The success of the changes have not only brought profile, but also in turn has brought spectators, sponsorship and in turn encouraged young people to participate.

TT needs to look at ways of achieving similar outcomes. What changes could we make to our regional playing programme to capture interest from sponsors and media? And what changes could we make to our major tournaments to achieve the same? Would sponsors be more likely to engage with a central body to ensure continuity and build relationships as opposed to dealing with a different regional body each year? Would it be more likely that a relationship with media could be built by a National body than different regional bodies?

For TT to compete against other codes we need to have administrators with clear views about their role, who are motivated by the challenge of finding what changes are needed to progress our sport, and who have the ability to lead others in that direction. If golf is required to “change or perish” then TT has no option but to match the commitment if we are to secure our future and once again be seen as a genuine sporting option by all ages of people, particularly young people.

Ratings Update

Real Sport withdrew their support system for IMR, Website and Ratings at the end of last year.

Some considerable time has been spent on trying to resolve:

- a. A temporary solution to ratings for 2008 and
- b. A permanent solution for a rating system owned and operated by TTNZ.

It has now been found that the options for a temporary quick fix solution are too costly for TTNZ to entertain. One was to piggy back on to the OTTF system, but changing that system to accept input from the Tournament Play system operated throughout NZ has not been possible, and conversely the cost of amending the tournament play system to cater for the OTTF is too high. Two other options, a totally separate temporary system and a reformatting of tournament files from the tournament system to cater for the OTTF also involved a cost TTNZ cannot afford.

The Board has therefore decided that there will not be any rating system for 2008.

While mindful of the fact many players will be upset by this, it is also the Board's wish that we develop a fully automated system which will interface with tournament control systems in use in New Zealand.

By courtesy of the OTTF ratings person, use is being made of NZ players' ratings on the OTTF system and these are now displayed on the web site.

Discussions and investigation are ongoing for a permanent system, and the expectations are, subject to funds being obtained from a Trust, that TTNZ will have its own rating system by year's end.

This raises a few questions which will be asked by players:

How will seedings be made for National tournaments.

The Technical Committee will use the rating list on website. Players not on list shall be assessed and inserted in appropriate place. For New Zealand players they will be assessed against association rankings and results of all tournaments which have been submitted to TTNZ and received by Technical Committee. As in the past the TC have power to change seedings where ratings are not appropriate.

Cut off point for Graded events

Players who already appear on the rating list will hold their rating and position. Players who are not on list shall be assessed for rating first, then eligibility next.

Association Championships

Tournament controllers who have used TTNZ ratings in past will do so again and assess any non-rated player's by using their own knowledge or obtain from the player's own association.

Ron Garrett

Contributions to the Newsletter Welcome

We expect to publish bi-monthly

Photo Archives

TTNZ web site has photo archives - access from: Galleries/Archives-Photos.

We are always seeking photos from any year . Some info is missing from existing pics so feel free to peruse and advise us.

Individual Member Registration

All members must register through their associations.

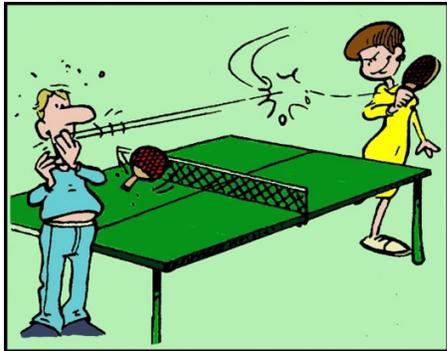
Our web site page - <http://www.tabletennis.org.nz/registration.htm> gives details together with appropriate registration forms.

Be currently registered - it helps TTNZ and Associations.

Entry Forms

Help the tournament organisers.

Do your bit by showing your 5 digit registration number, full and email address on all your entry forms. Registration numbers are available: <http://www.tabletennis.org.nz/registration.htm>



If this is your first issue of **Across the Table** it will be because you have been registered by your association.

You can unsubscribe - see below.

<p>Produced by Robin Radford (with editing assistance from John Kiley) for:</p> <p>TABLE TENNIS New Zealand Inc.</p> <p>Phone (04) 9162459 Fax (04) 4712152 P O Box 867 Level 5, Compudigm House 49 Boulcott St, Wellington</p>	<p>E-mail - ttnz@tabletennis.org.nz</p> <p>http://www.tabletennis.org.nz</p> <p>Newsletter: registrations@tabletennis.org.nz</p>	<p>If you do not want to receive these newsletters email: registrations@tabletennis.org.nz using the email address this was sent to. Please include your name in the body of the email.</p>
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