

Upcoming Events

June	5-6	Waikato Veterans Championships	Hamilton	
	11-13	Canterbury Residentials	Christchurch	
	13	Wellington Junior Age Group	Petone	
	13	Auckland Junior Open	Auckland	
	17	Entries Close: North Island Championships		
	19	Hawkes Bay Open	Napier	
	19-20	Northland Open	Whangarei	
	21-27	Commonwealth Championships	Malaysia	
	26-27	Nelson Open	Nelson	
	27	Wairarapa Open	Carterton	
July	3	South Canterbury Open	Timaru	
	4	Counties Manukau Open	Manurewa	
	10-11	Waitemata Open	Waitemata	
	13-14	North Island Teams Events	Palmerston North	
	15-18	North Island Championships	Palmerston North	
	17-18	Canterbury Junior Open	Christchurch	
	22	Entries Close: South Island Championships		
	31	Northern Junior Round Robin	Hamilton	
	31	Manawatu Hard Bat Tournament	Palmerston North	
	August	7-8	Auckland Open	Auckland
7-8		Wellington Open	Wellington	
13-29		Olympic Games	Athens	
20-22		South Island Championships	Invercargill	
21-22		Wellington Spring Open	Wellington	
26		Entries Close: NZ Championships		
28-29		Waikato Open	Hamilton	
29		Wellington Developing Juniors	Petone	
September		4	Golden Bay Open	Takaka
4-5		Manawatu Open	Palmerston North	
10-12	Canterbury Open	Christchurch		
12	Northern Districts Grand Prix Finals	North Harbour		
22-23	NZ Schools Championships	North Harbour		
24-2 Oct	NZ Championships	Auckland		
October	30-31	NZ Maori Championships	Manurewa	
	16-23	Australian Veterans Championships	Canberra	
November	6-7	Waikato Summer Open	Hamilton	
	28-5 Dec	World Junior Championships	Japan	



TABLE TENNIS INFO

Issue: 24

May 2004

Oceania Championships



Practice time
Northland Stadium

Olympic Qualifying
Training in Sweden
World Teams Champs
Change of TTNZ Chair

Table Tennis appreciates
the support given by:



Published by **TABLE TENNIS New Zealand Inc.**

Phone (04) 9162459 Fax (04) 4712152 P O Box 867
Level 5, Compudigm House 49 Boulcott St, Wellington
E-mail - ttnz@tabletennis.org.nz
World Wide Web - <http://www.tabletennis.org.nz>



Produced by:
Robin Radford Ph 04-232 5672
16 St Edmund Cres Tawa Fax 04-232 9172
Wellington E-Mail rradford@paradise.net.nz
(Sub editing assistance from John Kiley)

Articles, letters and advertising
published herein do not necessarily
reflect the views of Table Tennis
New Zealand Inc.

New Zealand Open Veterans Championships



Veterans Test Match Welcome



My Serve

from James Morris

The Oceania Championships in Whangarei have been and gone. For me and the team, running this international event has been a busy time. It highlights the need to run a financially secure tournament so that the host association is not left with a burden of debt. Much planning and engaging sponsorship support was necessary for this outcome.

A highlight of the Oceania's for me was having fifteen umpires from around the Pacific rim which gave a professional touch and kept the scheduling on track. TV crews were expected from TV1 and TV3, but the breaking of a major rugby league story took priority. But I hope you were privileged to see Li Chunli and Karen Li on the news and the sports "Oscars" show. Great for the sport of table tennis.

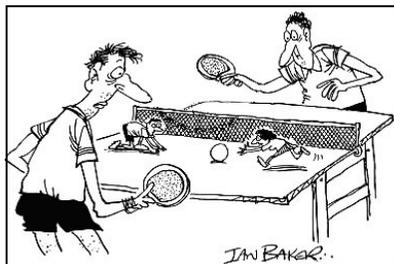
These days the opportunity is presenting itself to hold international tournaments in NZ including WJC events. ITTF initiative has been to develop three strategic junior championships: a world cadet challenge, world junior circuit and world junior championship. This is certainly an exciting prospect for the future.

Congratulations to the new board chairman, Graeme Muller. We'll have you playing in no time! I would like to thank the departing chairman Alan Hounsell for his leadership over the past few years. When I was on the board and working in the coaching area his budgeting skills were evident. Alan ran effective meetings in that he kept people on task and could timeframe those tasks. This certainly helped me in meeting my deadlines! I wish you well Alan in your new endeavours.

The pinnacle of sporting achievement is surely the Olympic Games. It's great that we have two players representing NZ in Athens. My best wishes in their quest for gold to Li Chunli in the singles, to Karen Li and Chunli in the doubles, and to coach Simeon Cairns.

Cheers

James



I endeavoured to learn how to loop.
I became the best one in my group.
When from out of the crop,
Came a guy who could chop,
And into the net my shots droop.

Kirk Stimpert (Wisconsin, USA)

Editorial

Difficult to grasp isn't it! Four of our top men players did not waste their time or money entering the Oceania Olympic qualifying tournament, because even if they came out on top the NZOC would still not have selected them and therefore the cost was not warranted.

So Australia is virtually automatically represented at the Olympics by default. Would not dare suggest that NZ would have come tops but over recent years our men have definitely held their own and had as good a chance as any. There is a lot of unfairness about this situation.

Read more in detail – page 13.

Manawatu have to be congratulated on the running of the NZ Veterans Championships. More in later pages but what a delight it was to be invited to a "corporate box". There were a number of them, all sponsored, close to the action with soft drinks and nibbles supplied. Full marks for that one.

And let's not forget the Oceanias in Whangarei – Ron Garrett's accolades are on page 8. It's good to hear of the expertise NZ has in conducting tournaments.

Robin



If this is the first time you have received this magazine, we welcome you as a registered member.

By being registered, you qualify to participate, if you wish, in any Open Championships in New Zealand. But whatever level you play at, simply by being registered you have joined a very large group of table tennis enthusiasts throughout New Zealand who enjoy each other's company and who share ideas and opinions with each other through this magazine.

The magazine is sent to all currently registered members and we hope you enjoy it. Feel free to contact us and submit questions, letters or interesting table tennis news at any time. Our mailing address is PO Box 867, Wellington. Email address ttnz@tabletennis.org.nz.

We also invite you to explore our website at <http://www.tabletennis.org.nz> which has lots of information on table tennis to help you.

Your registration number and association are printed on the address label on the envelope in which this magazine reached you. If you've mislaid the envelope, your number is also available from your Association or our website. The number must be quoted on your entry form for all national tournaments and most other major events.

Don't forget to advise us and your association of any change of address.

Enjoy your table tennis and once again, welcome !!!

Averil Roberts Administration Officer.

CHANGE AT THE TOP

After chairing the Board of Table Tennis New Zealand since the present management structure was set up in July, 1996, **Alan Hounsell** has decided to step down.

Throughout his term Alan was noted for his fairness, objectivity, and dispute resolution skills.

The new Chairman is Graeme Muller. A recent addition to Table Tennis New Zealand's management team, Graeme was profiled in our last issue. He brings extensive experience in marketing, information technology and strategic planning and is expected to provide energetic leadership.

Farewell from Outgoing Chairman

Alan Hounsell offers the following message to all table tennis players and officials...

At the recent Board meeting of Table Tennis New Zealand in Whangarei I decided, after careful consideration, that it was an appropriate time to step down as Chairman of TTNZ.

I am pleased that **Graeme Muller** has been elected as my replacement. I am sure Graeme will bring a fresh approach and new ideas which will benefit table tennis in the future.

It has been a pleasure and very satisfying to be involved with table tennis at Board level. The sport has made tremendous strides forward, but still faces many challenges that the lower profile sports encounter.

At our recent meeting we identified our strengths and weaknesses and this analysis will form the base of the sport's long term strategy. It will enable table tennis in New Zealand to continue to move forward.

As I will be standing down from the Board in November, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers (far too many to name here) without whom the sport could not function successfully.

I would also like to thank all past and present Board members and National Office staff for their support and contributions throughout my eight years with table tennis.

I wish everyone in the sport all the very best in the years to come.

Alan R Hounsell

Deputy Pays Tribute

To allow a new Chairman time to take over while he is still around **Alan Hounsell** made the decision prior to a recent meeting to stand down as Chairman and the Board elected another non table tennis person (Graeme Muller - see page 6) to take over the helm.

A restructure of Table Tennis New Zealand in 1996 entrusted governance of the sport to a Board and management to the National Office. On 11 July 1996 the first Board was appointed and Alan elected Chairman. A person with a sound business and sporting background, he wasted no time in ensuring the Board kept to its role of governance.

A strong chairman, able to see the wider picture and with no particular interest in any one area of New Zealand, he was truly independent.

Throughout his eight years on the Board Alan always had the interests of table tennis players at heart, which was not always understood by some people (Who is this guy? He doesn't even play the sport). Most of these comments came from players who didn't lift a hand to volunteer for a job anyway.

Others made comment that Alan was rarely seen at national events. Being an independent appointed member this was not his role. Other Board members were usually in attendance. If TTNZ had plenty of funds then it may be OK to get the Chairman to events around the country, but TTNZ does not have the funds. Better to put monies into players.

Having been on the Board for all of Alan's time at the helm I can honestly say I have found him a pleasure to work with, a great chairman with an interest in the sport.

I wish him well in the future with the role he has taken on in another voluntary organisation.

Ron Garrett (Deputy Chairman, Table Tennis New Zealand)

STANDING ROOM ONLY

Boxers do it, basketball players do it, tennis players do it – why not table tennis players?

Do what?

Sit down while receiving advice during breaks in play.

Michael Scott, MD, has considered this and writes for the ITTF magazine, Table Tennis Illustrated:



I have been a ring-side boxing physician for many years. Some bouts used to go twenty rounds before being limited to fifteen or less. During the interval between rounds boxers routinely stood in their corners while their seconds feverishly attempted to neutralise the damage done in the preceding rounds. Finally, a thoughtful second purchased a small stool enabling his boxer to sit down between rounds. Initially, most boxers disdained this innovation as a sign of weakness and, as a defiant gesture to their opponent, continued standing between rounds. Nowadays it is accepted as standard procedure.

A similar situation evolved in basketball. Not too many years ago basketball coaches never had their players sit during 'time outs'. Instead they all stood in a tight circle obtaining instructions until the whistle blew to resume play. Finally, a few medically knowledgeable coaches, such as Coach Ramsey of Oregon, acquired foldable chairs. He utilized them during every break in play.

Astute coaches, trainers and athletes themselves realise that the pulse rate, blood pressure, muscular tension, mental and physiological stress, etc, can decrease dramatically with a brief change in posture from standing to sitting. Just a few moments sitting down can help revitalise the mind and body. In addition to boxing and basketball, it has been adopted as a standard procedure in many other sports. One may say that some are more strenuous than table tennis but to exemplify how mental and physical table tennis can be we need only recall the 2003 World Championships. Werner Schlager was exhausted after winning the final point in the men's singles final. To those of us nearby he said "I doubt if I could have continued." He was entitled to feel that way after his numerous grueling matches over several days.

I have been an official in a range of sports from archery to yachting and table tennis is one of the few that fail to routinely take advantage of this phenomenon. Table tennis coaches and players, especially in prolonged tournaments, should adopt this simple tactic.

Comments from New Chairman

Graeme Muller has submitted the following comments on taking over the Chairmanship of the TTNZ Board.....

There are enormous opportunities for Table Tennis in New Zealand and I would like to touch on five areas that I believe will make a difference for the future of the sport:

- **Focus on Juniors**

We have to find a way for the next table tennis champions, from the local schools and clubs, to be presented with opportunities to get more involved. The future for table tennis in New Zealand will come from our kids, from their experiences at school and from the fun they have playing table tennis with their friends and family. Therefore the TTNZ board must look for ways to get table tennis into the schools and to get the kids more involved.

- **Welcome Players from Abroad**

Another growth opportunity is the community of people from countries where table tennis is a high profile sport. Who knows, we may even find New Zealand's next Olympic champ. We have to grab the chance and find ways to grow table tennis communities around the country with these enthusiastic players.

- **Be Financially Self-Sufficient**

One of the best things the board can do for table tennis is develop means to be more self-sufficient in terms of funding. It is my ambition to find a way for TTNZ to be financially self-sufficient. Then we can invest association fees and other funding into new opportunities such as sending our top players to international events and building a name for NZ internationally as having some of the world's best table tennis players.

- **Utilise Technology**

I also believe that we can make things a lot easier and provide more long-term security for the sport by engaging technology to help us. From simple projects such as creating a multi-user website and upgrading the ratings system to a real-time, instantly online system, through to using technology to help our elite players improve their backhands. Funding agencies are very interested in helping sports that are embracing technology to make themselves more efficient. The TTNZ board will look for opportunities to constantly improve.

- **Promote Ourselves**

Let's tell the world. Table tennis is New Zealand's best kept secret. With a marketing background I am going to encourage the board to develop a marketing and public relations strategy to systematically improve the country's knowledge of table tennis, the fact that we have world class people playing for New Zealand, and the fact that so many Kiwis head down to their local hall for a game every week.

I might not have a table tennis background but I am passionate about leveraging my experience in marketing, technology and strategy to grow table tennis in New Zealand and ensure its future prosperity.

Graeme Muller (Chairman, Table Tennis New Zealand)



“Best Oceania Championships Ever” - Oceania President, Neil Harwood

GREAT WORK, NORTHLAND

Table Tennis Northland Chairman Brent Davies reports on the hosting of the Oceania Championships.....

Held in the Advocate Stadium and ASB Leisure Centre in Whangarei from 18-24 April, the Oceania Table Tennis Championships were a great success.

Neil Harwood, President of the Oceania Table Tennis Federation said in his closing address that they were the best Oceania Championships ever.

In addition to Neil Harwood, Oceania officials in attendance included Executive Director **Phil Males** and ITTF Council and Technical Committee member **Graeme Ireland**.

This was the first international event to be held in the redeveloped Advocate Stadium. Extensive local media coverage ensured great promotion and a great atmosphere throughout the tournament.

Ten countries participated with some Island nations having to overcome major obstacles to get here, including serious flooding in Fiji and visa delays for the Tongan team. However all teams arrived and were given a rousing welcome at the Opening Ceremony which included a Maori welcome, speeches and waiata, and the Whangarei Pipe Band playing the NZ National Anthem as part of a dramatic flag raising ceremony.

Highlight of the tournament was the New Zealand men's team win over Australia 3 - 2, with **Aaron Li** in great form beating **Russell Lavale** and **William Henzell**, and with **Andrew Hubbard** winning a crucial match over **Brett Clarke**.

The highlight of the Individuals was the win in the women's doubles final by **Li Chunli** and **Karen Li** over **Miao Miao** and **Jian Fang Lay**.

A notable feature of the tournament was that all team and individual matches were umpired by qualified umpires from Australia, Fiji, Japan and New Zealand.

The huge success of this event was due to generous sponsorship from **Southern Trust and Advance Whangarei**, along with the organisational skills of Tournament Director **James Morris**, **Colleen Atchison** from Sport Northland and Tournament Referee **David Jackson**. It was also great to call on the services of **Shona Cudby** as Tournament Controller.

The tournament ran smoothly because of the large team of volunteers who acted as team liaison officers, drivers, canteen staff, table stewards, and who also did countless other tasks. Marvellous meals were provided by **Christine Morris** and her team both during the tournament and the training camp which preceded it.

It was pleasing to receive the following comments in an email from Phil Males: "This was the best championship ever and that is indicative of the tremendous amount of effort you all put in to make the event a marvellous success. This cannot be achieved without commitment by everyone and without doubt this is what your association has in abundance.

The hospitality shown to all the visitors during the championships was also without precedence."

Prior to the tournament a 3 day training camp was held, attended by the Island nations and Northland junior players under the direction of **Steve Dainton**, Oceania Development Officer, with support from coaches **Jan Berner**, **Raoul Rainouard** and **Daryl Lew**.

One of the many memories from the tournament - on the Kiribati team's final shopping spree at the Warehouse on the Saturday night only hours before they were due to fly out one member won a 29 inch TV on a Scratchy and proudly carried it out to the awaiting van. As it was not practical to take the TV home to Kiribati, the liaison officer bought it for \$200 and there were smiles all round.

Table Tennis Northland now looks forward to hosting the New Zealand Veterans Championships at Easter 2005.

Brent Davies
Chairman, Table Tennis Northland

Jack of All Trades' View of Oceania Championships

By Ron Garrett

Northland Table Tennis administrators took on the huge task of running the 12th Oceania Championships at Whangarei and performed very well indeed.

Mind you we all knew (well, I did) that Northland would run a very good tournament. Planning for the event started over two years ago and a special thank you must go to that dynamo from the north, **James Morris** (top administrator, top coach, top player) and the team surrounding him.

Running an event like this involves a lot of hard work (headaches also), and the support of sponsors and the community. Well done Northland.

While it would be fair to say Australia and New Zealand rule the table at this stage, the Island nations of the Pacific are making giant strides. This is due to the ITTF/OTTF development programmes with firstly **Glenn Tepper** and now **Steve Dainton** visiting the Oceania countries (including NZ) in their successive roles as Development Officer.

It was the first time I had met Steve face to face and I am impressed with how he goes about his role and the rapport he has with everyone.

Oceania championships are important to all members in the region as they affect qualification for world events and results are important when seeking funding etc.

I was originally going to the Oceania's as a TTNZ delegate to the Biennial General Meeting (BGM), and nominee for the Oceania Management committee. Then in a weak moment I agreed to put my name down to umpire (assuming incorrectly that umpires would get a bit of free time; watch some other matches; visit Whangarei city; have a beer; etc). Not the case, almost full time at the table Monday and Tuesday (8.30am till 9.30pm), Wednesday morning, free in the afternoon, quick dinner for all who were attending BGM (envious of others who could stay at restaurant to eat at leisure and enjoy a wine or beer).

Thursday and Friday similar to Monday and Tuesday with a couple of meetings thrown in; Saturday morning a TTNZ SWOT meeting followed by a Board meeting, then a bit of umpiring to finish off.

Five days later I am still catching up on sleep.

Seriously, I actually enjoyed the Championships and it was great for Northland (and players I think) to have all matches umpired by qualified umpires.

Well done to Northland and all players, coaches and officials who took part.

Ron Garrett
Deputy Chairman TTNZ Board
Oceania Management Committee (New member)
Jack of all trades in TT and player when time permits



Wayne Gear, Ringside.....

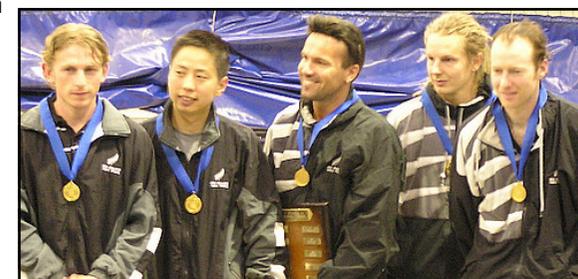
a blow by blow account of the exciting Men's Teams Final at the Oceania Championships

DOWN TO THE WIRE

The stage was set for another close encounter between Australia and NZ. In the team huddle back at the motel the boys decided it was their turn to "lift the trophy". Australia was unaware of NZ's "X" factor (the secret, last minute arrival of Andrew Hubbard after a 35 hour flight from France). Everything was going to plan - our predictions of the Aussie team format; Hubbard's 11th hour arrival, and our winning streak with tosses.

After a tentative start by **Aaron Li** against William Henzell things weren't looking good with Aaron down 2 games to 1 and 8-10 in the fourth. Then miraculously Aaron pulled out two big serves, took the game 12-10 and steamrolled William in the 5th and final game 11-3, winning the last 8 points. NZ 1, Australia 0.

Next up was **Shane Laugesen** against his nemesis Russell Lavale. Shane, our dreadlocked version of David Beckham, fought hard but appeared to be lacking tough match play and he went down 3-0.



L/R: Peter Craven, Aaron Li, Wayne Gear, Shane Laugesen, Andrew Hubbard enjoying their medals

Andrew "Mutha" Hubbard then faced Brett Clarke. This game had it all. Mutha was at his animated best as he brought the 400+ crowd to their feet in a real frenzy. By the final stages of the 5th game the atmosphere was electric - screams and chants of "K I W I" resounded across the stadium. Mutha's commitment was 110%. He was so determined to make returns that one of the corner umpires was "taken out" and had to be replaced.

When he staved off 4 match points and took the match 16-14 in the 5th game, the NZ bench, including local hero and newspaper star, **Peter Craven**, were ecstatic.

4th match - Shane Laugesen v William Henzell. This started off even enough but midway through the second game Henzell's 9 years of playing in Sweden started to show and much to the disappointment of the girls in the crowd, the match was soon over 3-0.

The stage was now set for the dream final match between NZ's formidable No 1, Aaron Li, and the current Oceania champion, Russell Lavale. Aaron was brimming with confidence and with a passionate crowd behind him, never looked like losing, taking the match 3-0.

The medal ceremony was very moving for the team members and equally rewarding for the loyal and vocal home crowd at Whangarei. They created an atmosphere which enabled the players to rise to the occasion and produce exciting, high quality table tennis.

The trophy is ours and deservedly so, according to the team coach.

Wayne Gear

MIXED RESULTS FOR NEW ZEALAND AT OCEANIA CHAMPS

Apart from the dramatic win by New Zealand in the men's team event, exuberantly covered by team coach Wayne Gear in previous article, the two-yearly showdown with Australia and other Oceania countries proved to be a mixture of triumphs and near-misses for the 38 New Zealanders who competed.

The open singles events in particular were a disappointment, with only **Aaron Li** reaching the men's semi-finals and both **Li Chunli** and **Karen Li** also losing their respective women's semi-finals. But then Karen and Chunli boosted national pride in great style by beating the top Australian pair in the women's doubles final. **Aaron Li** and **Peter Craven** reached the men's doubles final.

The women's team was beaten 3-1 by Australia.

Better news in the age-categories

Gold was struck by several New Zealanders in the restricted age-group events. **Jenny Hung** and **Sophie Shu** (both under 15) scored an excellent win in the under 18 girls doubles final, beating the strong Australian pairing of **Michelle Beaumont** and **Claire Campbell-Innes**. Not surprisingly, they also won the under 15 girls doubles and Sophie Shu triumphed in the under 15 girls singles. **Matthew Lowe** won a gold medal in the under 15 boys doubles with his Australian partner **Kyle Davis**. Kiwis clean swept the Under 21 men's events, with **Andy Huang** winning the singles, and **John Cordue** and **Simon Wallace** the doubles.

Individual Events Medal Winners;

Open Men's singles:	Aaron Li – Bronze
Open Women's Singles:	Li Chunli – Bronze
	Karen Li – Bronze
Open Men's Doubles:	Aaron Li & Peter Craven – Silver
	Andrew Hubbard and Shane Laugesen – Bronze
Open Women's Doubles:	Li Chunli and Karen Li – GOLD
	Sarah Ho and Raewyn Young – Bronze

Open Mixed Doubles:	Shane Laugesen & Karen Li – Bronze
Under 21 Men's Singles:	Andy Huang – GOLD
	Simon Wallace – Silver
	Josh Alexandre – Bronze
Under 21 Women's Singles:	Sophie Shu – Bronze
	Hanna Squire – Bronze
Under 21 Men's Doubles:	John Cordue & Simon Wallace – GOLD
	Nathan Lowe & Binbin Zhu – Silver
	Albert Cheng & Chris Erskine – Bronze
Under 21 Women's Doubles:	Jenny Hung & Sophie Shu – Silver
	Michelle McCarthy & Hanna Squire – Bronze
Under 18 Girls Singles:	Sophie Shu – Silver
	Michelle McCarthy – Bronze
Under 18 Boys Doubles:	Nathan Lowe & Binbin Zhu – Bronze
	Albert Cheng & Chris Erskine – Bronze
Under 18 Girls Doubles:	Jenny Hung & Sophie Shu – GOLD
	Michelle McCarthy & Hanna Squire – Bronze
Under 15 Boys Singles:	Matthew Lowe – Silver
	James Harter – Bronze
Under 15 Girls Singles:	Sophie Shu – GOLD
	Jenny Hung – Silver
	Sally Ho – Bronze
Under 15 Boys Doubles:	Matthew Lowe (with K Davis, Australia) – GOLD
	James Harter & Andrew Rieper – Silver
Under 15 Girls Doubles:	Jenny Hung & Sophie Shu – GOLD
	Sally Ho & Laura Rusk – Bronze

Team Events:

Men	(Aaron Li, Andrew Hubbard, Shane Laugesen, Peter Craven):	GOLD
Women	(Li Chunli, Karen Li, Raewyn Young):	Silver
Under 18 Boys	(Albert Cheng, Nathan Lowe, Chris Erskine, Binbin Zhu):	Silver
Under 18 Girls	(Hanna Squire, Michelle McCarthy, Jenny Hung, Sophie Shu):	Silver

**The master of ping and of pong
Played anti and pips that were long.
His opponents with dread
And faces of red
Hit all shots too short or
too long.**

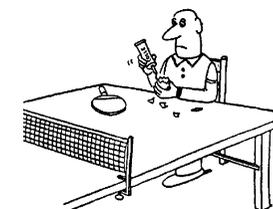
A nice wee limerick (originally published in the UASTT magazine) from



Kent Davault (Washington USA)

Who, when we sought permission responded with:

**I received to my surprise
A letter of Kiwi size
For permission to use
My limerick muse
I think I'm in paradise**



Ph 03 313 3449 Fax 03 313 3412
email: donic@inet.net.nz
327 Coldstream Road Rangiora

<http://www.donictabletennis.co.nz>

Li Sisters Qualify for Olympics

Li Chunli has qualified for a singles place at the Olympic Games in Athens in August and her sister Karen Li will join her in the doubles. Karen missed out on singles qualification and no NZ men have qualified.

The places of Chunli and Karen in the NZ Olympic team remain dependent on final decisions by the TTNZ National Selection Panel and the NZ Olympic Committee but their respective world rankings of 43 and 111 make final selection almost a formality.

If Chunli heads for Athens it will be yet another milestone in a remarkable career. It will be her fourth Olympics (only canoeist Ian Fergusson has exceeded that in NZ), and follows her sensational Gold Medal win at the Manchester Commonwealth Games in 2002.

Complex Qualifying Process

The Oceania Olympic Qualifying Tournament was held in Melbourne on 12-15 April. Three singles places are available for Oceania players at the Olympics and in the qualifying tournament all Oceania players nominated by their country play a round robin followed by two knock-out tournaments. Once a player has won a place they do not participate in the process to allocate the other places. This is a recent refinement to prevent anyone (so inclined) from deliberately losing a match to another player from the same country to help them qualify, possibly at the expense of a player from another country.

The winner of the round robin is the first qualifier and the remaining players compete for the second place in a knock-out tournament, seeded according to their finishing positions in the round robin. The third place goes to the winner of a second knock-out tournament, with the winner of the first knock-out removed from the draw. Doubles qualification is automatic if both players in a pair are singles qualifiers. Otherwise knockout doubles tournaments are also held. The full rules are displayed on the Oceania TT Federation website – ottf.org.au (click on Rules, OTTF General Regulations, Olympic Qualifying).

Chunli was the top woman qualifier, winning the round robin and dropping no more than one game in any of her four best of seven matches. She and Karen won the doubles knock-out tournament.

Other NZ Singles Players Come Close

Karen Li won a singles place in 2000 and was extraordinarily unlucky not to win one this year. She finished second to her sister in the round robin and reached the final of both knock-out tournaments. She then lost both finals to players she had beaten in the round robin.

In the men's event, **Simon Wallace** was narrowly beaten in seven games by Australian **Trevor Brown** in the final of the second knock-out tournament, and in the semi-final of the same knock-out **Peter Craven** had only just lost to Wallace 12-10 in the seventh game. **John Cordue** also participated in the tournament.

Peter Jackson, veteran of three Olympics, including Seoul 1988 - the first at which Table Tennis was played, and **Shane Laugesen**, who narrowly missed qualification in 2000, were both unavailable, as were **Andrew Hubbard** and **Aaron Li**. Their unavailability and the NZ Olympic selection criteria in general are discussed in "The Road to the Olympics" on page 13.

The full list of Oceania qualifiers is: singles/doubles - **Li Chunli** (NZ), Jian Fang Lay (Australia), Miao Miao (Australia), William Henzell (Australia), Russell Lavale (Australia), Trevor Brown (Australia); doubles only - **Karen Li** (NZ), David Zalberg (Australia).

The only Oceania country to enter the Qualifying Tournament other than New Zealand and Australia was Kiribati, represented by Kevin Reo who was never a serious threat.



THE ROAD TO THE OLYMPICS:

Well Maintained, or in Need of Repair??

By John Kiley

Get out your copy of the very first issue of *Table Tennis Info*, dated October, 1996. Open it at page 9 (it only has 12 pages) and read the bottom two paragraphs. If your copy is faded beyond legibility, temporarily mislaid, or if you're too young (or too old) to remember 1996, the paragraphs are reproduced here in full:

When the top Australian player is selected for the Olympics and you beat him three times in one tournament, you can be forgiven for feeling hard done by when omitted from the New Zealand Olympic team. When you've also beaten the world number 70, the world number 50 and the world number 25 over the past twelve months, the decision seems even more harsh.

That is precisely what happened to Peter Jackson. A veteran of two previous Olympics; playing better than ever and with the highest world ranking ever attained by a New Zealand male, Jackson's hopes were high after a sensational Oceania qualifying tournament in Melbourne where he won all fifteen matches. But it wasn't enough. The Olympic selectors were working within the confines of a strict criteria, considering only players with a realistic chance of finishing in the top half of the field - regardless of how they performed in any qualifying tournament within the sport.

So the selection criteria applied by the New Zealand Olympic Committee in 1996 meant that Oceania's best male player, New Zealand's **Peter Jackson**, was omitted from the New Zealand team and, as it finally turned out, *three* Australian players, all weaker than Peter, represented Oceania at the Atlanta Olympics.

This happened in 1996 and could just as easily happen again today.

The International Olympic Committee, the International Table Tennis Federation and the Oceania Table Tennis Federation have put in place an arrangement that gives all Oceania players an equal chance of making it to the Olympics. Oceania is guaranteed three singles places in the field of 64 in each of the men's and women's competitions, and up to two more places for extra doubles players in each field of 32 doubles pairs. The Oceania TT Federation conducts an Olympic Qualifying Tournament to determine who fills these places.

Finding Oceania's Best

Nominations are invited from all 18 Oceania member countries and the nominated players compete in a series of round robin and knockout events (details are on page 12) to determine the Olympic place winners and to rank all the players from top to bottom.

The full ranking is necessary to provide for injury, withdrawals and, crucially, also for the non-selection of any player by their national Olympic selectors. If any of the winners of Olympic places are not selected in their own country's Olympic team, the place goes to the next ranked player. If no players meet their country's selection criteria, the Oceania table tennis places are forfeited and are then up for grabs world-wide with no shortage of takers.

NZ's High Olympic Standards

The Olympic selection criteria for table tennis in New Zealand was updated prior to Sydney 2000 in negotiations involving the NZ Olympic Committee and Table Tennis New Zealand in 1999. The Olympic Committee proposed that, for automatic selection, a player must have a world ranking of 100 or better. Executive Director **Michael Brown** was able to negotiate this down to 130 and TTNZ maintained it at that level for Athens 2004.

The criteria also provides that a player with a ranking lower than 130 may be considered for selection if they can be shown to have a realistic chance of finishing in the top half of the field. TTNZ had little room to move on this requirement – it is a firmly established NZOC criterion and consistent with the selection requirements put on all other Olympic sports in New Zealand. All NZ athletes selected for the Olympics are expected to be either medal prospects or at least likely top half finishers. The NZ Olympic Committee makes no apology for this demanding standard and officials regularly express pride in the fact that New Zealand aims higher than many other countries.

Australia's selection policy is more liberal, and herein lies the problem. If the two countries were able to liaise with each other and set a similar standard there would be no problem. Then either the Oceania Qualifying Tournament winners would go to the Olympics, or nobody from Oceania would go. As it stands now, a New Zealand player might blitz the field (as in 1996), but fail to meet the NZ criteria and be replaced at the Olympics by a lesser player from Australia who meets the Australian criteria. This seems unfair and against the spirit of continental representation at the Games.

Players Stay Away

Four of our top male players, **Peter Jackson, Aaron Li, Andrew Hubbard** and **Shane Laugesen**, all declared themselves unavailable for the 2004 Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Melbourne in April. One reason was the lack of available funding to assist them – TTNZ faced an unprecedented number of international events in 2004 and was unable to provide financial assistance for the selected players to travel to Melbourne. Those based in Europe in particular were therefore confronted with a major financial hurdle. But the main reason given was that, even if they won places at the tournament, they were unlikely to be selected as their world rankings were well below 130.

Peter Jackson was unavailable for the qualifying tournament in any event as it coincided with a national level coach education course in France that he was committed to. Asked his opinion on the NZ Olympic Committee criteria, he felt the ranking threshold of 130 is unrealistically high for Table Tennis. 862 male players are currently ranked in the world and he considers a level of 230 would be fairer. Many high ranked players are ineligible for the Games due to continental limitations.

The new Chairman of TTNZ's National Selection Panel, **Bryan Keane** (appointed after the Athens agreement was struck) favours a criteria which leaves players in no doubt over what they have to do. "Set a realistic world ranking benchmark and advise players that if they pass that benchmark and win a place at the Qualifying Tournament, they will go to the Olympics," he advocates. He feels TTNZ should also ensure adequate funding is always budgeted for full NZ participation in the qualifying tournament.

Memories of '96

With Jackson, Li, Hubbard and Laugesen all absent, Australia's William Henzell was the top qualifier in Melbourne. Aaron Li beat him in the Oceania Men's Team final a few days later. And second qualifier Russell Lavale's world ranking is almost identical to Peter Jackson's at around 265. But with the qualifying tournament now history, we can do little more than follow the fortunes of Henzell, Russell Lavale and Trevor Brown (winners of the men's singles places) to see if any or all of them are selected in the Australian Olympic team. If so (and according to a Melbourne newspaper it's a mere formality), memories of 1996 will come flooding back.



Is it a Game of Two Halves, or Just One?

In conclusion we need to pose a question central to the whole issue: is a top half finish a fair target for any Oceania country in a sport like Table Tennis, played in almost every country in the world? The 1996 *Table Tennis Info* article, displaying remarkable maturity and insight for an infant publication, concluded with the words: "*Maintain Olympic standards by all means - but Olympic standards cover the whole field, not just half of it.*" ☒

Top 5 Ratings as at May 14 2004

Full lists at
[http://
www.tabletennis.org.nz](http://www.tabletennis.org.nz)

Open Men

1. Aaron Li
2. Peter Jackson
3. Johnny Liang
4. Brad Chen
5. Shane Laugesen

Open Women

1. Li Chunli
2. Karen Li
3. Yuan Yuan
4. Mi Ryung Chun
5. Sun Yang

Over 70 Men

1. Bill Otene
2. Dennis Galvin
3. Merv Allardyce
4. Paul Bargh
5. Eddie Moore

Over 70 Women

1. Annice Robottom
2. Nellie Milich
3. Barbara Tabb
4. Irene Kent
5. Betty Thompson

Over 60 Men

1. Ron Garrett
2. Chip Eade
3. Warren Evans
4. Alan Alabaster
5. Jim Jarmin

Over 60 Women

1. Pauline Bennyworth
2. Merle Sneddon
3. Ngaire Garrett
4. Annice Robottom
5. Christine Cunningham

Over 50 Men

1. Geoff Rau
2. William Weinstock
3. Kevin Fogarty
4. Kheng Yee Lai
5. Ron Garrett

Over 50 Women

1. Val Beaver
2. Averil Roberts
3. Lynley Barker
4. Pauline Bennyworth
5. Merle Sneddon

Over 40 Men

1. Peter Jackson
2. Malcolm Darroch
3. Alan Pedley
4. Kevin Barry
5. Lynda White

Over 40 Women

1. Li Chunli
2. Val Beaver
3. Hilary Low
4. Lynda Simpson
5. Averil Roberts

Under 21 Men

1. Brad Chen
2. Andy Huang
3. Simon Wallace
4. John Cordue
5. Adrian Soh

Under 21 Women

1. Sun Yang
2. Wu Chen
3. Li Tong
4. Sophie Shu
5. Mornica Li

Under 19 Boys

1. Brad Chen
2. Andy Huang
3. Simon Wallace
4. Josh Alexandre
5. Binbin Zhu

Under 19 Girls

1. Wu Chen
2. Sophie Shu
3. Mornica Li
4. Yu Han Zhang
5. Jenny Hung

Under 17 Boys

1. Binbin Zhu
2. Nathan Lowe
3. Jonathan Yam
4. Steven Zeng
5. Jack Wells

Under 17 Girls

1. Wu Chen
2. Sophie Shu
3. Jenny Hung
4. Jiani Hu
5. Hanna Squire

Under 15 Boys

1. Steven Zeng
2. Matthew Lowe
3. Terry Zeng
4. Michael Wu
5. Rohan Jayakar

Under 15 Girls

1. Sophie Shu
2. Jenny Hung
3. Jiani Hu
4. Chen Ying Qing
5. Sally Ho

Under 13 Boys

1. Terry Zeng
2. Ethan Luo
3. Phillip Xiao
4. Hanson Ling
5. Alex Lam

Under 13 Girls

1. Jenny Hung
2. Chen Ying Qing
3. Helen Chen
4. Megan Stratford
5. Villa Yan



Ph 03 313 3449
Fax 03 313 3412
email:
donic@inet.net.nz
327 Coldstream Rd
Rangiora

[http://www.
donictabletennis.
co.nz](http://www.donictabletennis.co.nz)

NZ Veterans Championships

Darroch and Pedley in a League of their Own

New Zealand's complete dominance of the men's Over 40 section was the highlight of the New Zealand Veterans Championships in Palmerston North at Easter.

Malcolm Darroch (Canterbury) and **Alan Pedley** (Manawatu) were so far ahead of the best of the Australians and other New Zealanders that points scored against them in all matches could be counted on one hand. They won the test 5-0, cleaned up big in the individual events and the only players to come near them were themselves.

The Australians strength was in the O50's, but in the test there was one Kiwi who stepped up a notch - **Kevin Fogarty**. He was the surprise omission from the test team last year so had a point to prove and raised his game to suit the occasion.

Australia produced a secret weapon, **Ivana Trnko**, in the women's tests. This quality player headed two sections, as the Krafty Kangaroos said they had no other player. This, in effect, gave the Australians two divisions. Ivana went on to grab a truckful of medals in the individuals.

Overall the test was lost 15-25, a slight improvement on previous years, but included six wins by Ivana.

In the individual events **Val Beaver** and **Averil Roberts** collected their mandatory medal, a gold in the 50's doubles, not contended by Trnko; and the formidable Australians **Mick Wright**, **Ken Cole**, **Tommy Samuelsson**, **Tony Webb**, **Tony Herbert**, **Case deBondt**, **Geoff Nesbitt**, **Werner Borkhardt** and **Ken Sands** all contributed to the New Zealanders' downfall.

One of the big minuses was the holding of the Jets national basketball match and its accompanying razzamatazz, whistles, blaring music and announcements as well as the roaring crowds, which made table tennis in the same hall rather hazardous, as tempers rose.

But Manawatu are to be congratulated on a great tournament. They had 22 new Butterfly tables and plenty of room. There were nice little touches on the first night with corporate boxes and bowls of fruit for every player in the test. The official opening was not obtrusive and the closing ceremony (the social) helped mix officials and players from both countries.

Dennis Galvin



Over 60 Women's Team Winners
Manawatu
L/R- **Heather Paul**, **Merle Sneddon**
and
Marlene Wisneth

Veterans Championships Palmerston North 2004

<u>Over 40 years</u>	<u>Winner - GOLD</u>	<u>Singles Runner Up</u>
Men's Singles	Malcolm Darroch (C)	Alan Pedley (MN)
Women's Singles	Ivana Trnka (AUS)	Val Beaver (NH)
Men's Doubles	M Darroch & A Pedley (C/MN)	
Women's Doubles	I Trnka & D Wilson (AUS)	
Mixed Doubles	T Webb & I Trnka (AUS)	
<u>Over 50 years</u>		
Men's Singles	Thomas Samuelsson (AUS)	Mick Wright (AUS)
Women's Singles	Ivana Trnka (AUS)	Val Beaver (NH)
Men's Doubles	T Samuelsson & T Webb (AUS)	
Women's Doubles	V Beaver & A Roberts (NH/W)	
Mixed Doubles	T Webb & I Trnka (AUS)	
<u>Over 60 years</u>		
Men's Singles	Mick Wright (AUS)	Ken Cole (AUS)
Women's Singles	Pauline Bennyworth (WK)	Merle Sneddon (MN)
Men's Doubles	W Borkhardt & A Drury (AUS)	
Women's Doubles	N Garrett & M Sneddon (S/MN)	
Mixed Doubles	K Cole & E Edwards (AUS)	
<u>Over 65 years</u>		
Men's Singles	Case deBondt (AUS)	Tony Herbert (AUS)
Women's Singles	Merle Sneddon (MN)	Margaret McGregor (WT)
Men's Doubles	C deBondt & G Nesbitt (AUS)	
Women's Doubles	A Robottom & M Sneddon (MN)	
Mixed Doubles	K Sands & B Davies (AUS)	
<u>Over 70 years</u>		
Men's Singles	Tony Herbert (AUS)	Geoff Nesbitt (AUS)
Women's Singles	Annice Robottom (MN)	Nellie Milich (NL)
Men's Doubles	T Herbert & G Nesbitt (AUS)	
Women's Doubles	A Robottom & A Waye (MN/AUS)	
Mixed Doubles	T Herbert & A Robottom (AUS/MN)	
<u>Over 75 years</u>		
Men's Singles	Karl Preuss (AUS)	Ron Lynch (AUS)
Men's Doubles	K Preuss & D Sherman (AUS)	

The Veterans Teams Events GOLD medal winners

O40	Men A	Canterbury 1: Malcolm Darroch, Lyndon White
	Men B	Wellington 4: Martin Young, Malcolm Wong
	Women	Victoria: Ivana Trnka, Debbie Wilson
O50	Men A	Queensland 1: Thomas Samuelsson, Tony Webb
	Men B	Waitemata 2: Chip Eade, Blair Melvin, Ron Leong
	Women	North Harbour: Val Beaver, Jill Murray
O60	Men A	Queensland: Tony Herbert, Allen Drury, Werner Borkhardt
	Men B	Manawatu 3: Ray Zinsli, Werner Kraft, August Bigalske
	Women	Manawatu: Merle Sneddon, Heather Paul, Marlene Wisneth
O65	Men	Victoria: Case deBondt, Geoff Nesbitt
	Women	Manawatu 1: Merle Sneddon, Annice Robottom
O70	Men	Waitemata: Bill Otene, Dennis Galvin, Ron Trautvetter
	Women	Northland: Joyce Woodward, Nellie Milich