



TEST MATCH  
FRANCE 

V.

NEW ZEALAND

COWLES  
STADIUM  
26th.AUG.  
1975



## Extract from 1975 TTNZ Annual report

### 5. Visit of French Club Team:

The visit to New Zealand by members of the French Club Sportif Athletique arose through approaches made by the Deputy President Federation Francaise de Tennis de Table (Monsieur Jean Mercier) to the Secretary, New Zealand Association at Calcutta, India during the World Championships in February 1975. Subsequently a letter was received from the club outlining tour plans which embraced Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia and stating that the party would number seven. As the short time the party would be in New Zealand coincided with the holding of the New Zealand National Open Championships we were pleased to accept their entries for the championships. When the party arrived from Australia they numbered 16 which gave us unexpected problems with accommodation.

The club players included Jacques Secretin, the current Champion of France (ranked 14 in the world), Vincent Purkart, a former Champion of France and Danny Dhondt, a former men's doubles champion of France. The women players were Yveline Leclerc, currently ranked No. 2 in France and Dominique Szalka, currently ranked No. 6 in France.

With the permission of the French Federation an international contest was staged at Christchurch on 26 August and billed as New Zealand v Selection Francaise. The contest was won by France 5 - 0 in the men's section and 4 - 1 in the women's section. Results were (French players named first)

Men: J. Secretin beat J.R. Morris, 21-13, 21-18, beat R.E. Lee, 21-11, 21-10; D. Dhondt beat Lee, 21-19, 19-21, 21-18, beat Morris 20-22, 21-19, 21-13.

Doubles: Secretin and V. Purkart beat Morris and Lee, 19-21, 21-19, 21-19

Women: Miss D. Szalka beat Miss J.G. Morris, 21-18, 21-11, lost to Miss A.D. Stonestreet, 11-21, 14-21; Miss Y. Leclerc beat Miss Stonestreet, 21-19, 21-18, beat Miss Morris 25-23, 21-19

Doubles: Misses Szalka and Leclerc beat Mrs N. Traill and Miss Stonestreet 16-21, 21-12, 22-20.

Following the contest an outstanding 3-game exhibition was given by Secretin and Purkart. The exhibition combined table tennis skills and humour of 45 minutes duration of the style and standard we had not seen before. Purkart had a series of amazing trick bats which he produced from a large bag under the table often while the ball was in play. His gestures deadpan expression and comic timing showed him to be a master of his craft. Secretin was a most efficient foil and Dhondt who umpired the match added to the occasion with witty comments. It was a sensational exhibition and fully captured by television.

The unofficial international contest was televised in part throughout New Zealand the next evening and on Saturday 31 August in the sports session on TV 1 a lot of time was devoted to table tennis including one of three game exhibition matches.

The visit of the French party caused problems due largely to the alterations in travel, poor communications and to a lesser degree to misunderstanding but these were offset through the excellent publicity the sport received and the wonderful competition New Zealand players experienced. The participation of the French players in the championships was a thrilling experience and we are grateful to the hospitality given by the Canterbury Association.