



# **ACROSS THE NET**

## **Melton Table Tennis**

**August 2018**

**Edition 47**

### **AGM NEWS, WINTER WINNERS, OZ OPEN REVIEW, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE**

In this edition we talk about our AGM and the new committee, praise the winners of our winter season, review the Oz Open, and discuss the problems it had, talk up passing time on the moon, umpires not knowing the rules, free throws, and we re-visit an article from last year that needs to be re-visited.

### **MTTA AGM**

On **Thursday** the **12<sup>th</sup>** of **July**, Melton Table Tennis held its **Annual General Meeting**. In his address to members, club President **Chris Blake** stated that the club was in a healthy position organisationally and financially, with some of the highest standards of play seen for many years. Chris also confirmed that club fees would not be increased for the 2019 seasons.

These sentiments were backed up by Club Secretary **Geof Walker** who also highlighted MTTA's success at inter-club competitions and at the recent Teams Championships in Bendigo.

Club Treasurer **Larry Hallinan** gave his report, confirming that the club was in a good financial position, with an increase in the bank balance compared to last year.

With the election of office-bearers, Chris Blake announced that after more than ten years at the helm, he was standing down as president, but hoped to continue his contributions by remaining on the committee in a lesser capacity.

Your new committee is :-

President :	<b>Glenn O'Dea</b>
Vice President :	<b>Matthew Camilleri</b>
Secretary :	<b>Geof Walker</b>
Treasurer :	<b>Larry Hallinan</b>
General Committee :	<b>Brian Barker</b>
	<b>Chris Blake</b>
	<b>Dean Camilleri</b>
	<b>Sharyn Ciberlin</b>
	<b>Graham Huggett</b>
	<b>Sarah Lappin</b>
	<b>Ed Menegol</b>
	<b>Annemarie Rothwell</b>

## **AN END TO WINTER SEASON**

Last Thursday night saw the Grand Finals of the Winter season being played. And what a great night it was. All matches were of a very high standard, and all were very close. Our congratulations to the winners.

**A1 Grade** saw **Shannon Camilleri, Chris Addis** and **Andy Pais** beating **Matt Camilleri, Lawrence Wu & Chris Blake**, 4 matches to 3.

**A2 Grade** saw **Mina Gerguis, Matt Magro** and **Steve Jaunkalns** triumphing over **Ed Menegol, Connor Ziday & Steve Batten** by 6 matches to 4.

**B Grade** saw **Dillon Ziday, Mina Faik** and **Mohammad Shaiful** taking the honours over **Sarah Lappin, Jesse McKinnes** and **Glenn O'Dea** by 6 matches to 4.

In **C Grade** it was chocolates for **Peter Wlodacyzk, Adam Farmer** and **Jack Jensen** and boiled lollies for **Simon Reich and Lauren Minehan** with **Sharyn Ciberlin** filling in for **George Jensen** by 6 matches to 4.

The Leading Player for the season in **A1 Grade** was **Matt Camilleri** in a countback from Michael Louey. **Milan Lukovic** was streets ahead in winning the **A2 Grade** Leading Player. **Chris Busittil** took out the **B Grade** Leading Player, narrowly ahead of Ebraam Ghobros, and **George Jensen** just got home for the **C Grade** Leading Player ahead of a chasing pack which included Ryan Dickie and Mohammed Chiya.

## **2018 MTTA CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Our thoughts should now turn to the annual **Club Championships** which start this week. Some players choose not to attend these nights, thinking that they're not good enough to challenge for the honours. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Club Championships are designed to provide a level playing field for all club members.

We invite you to attend one, two or all three of these nights. From the top of the player list to the bottom, everyone has a chance at winning an award. And apart from all that, it's another opportunity to play.

**Week 1** on the **2<sup>nd</sup> of August** is the **Handicap Championship**. This is a prestigious event in our club calendar with many considering this to be the best trophy to win. This is because you are not only battling people in your own grade level, but players from other grades on a level playing field.

In **Week 2**, on the **9<sup>th</sup> of August**, we run the **Doubles Championship** and the **Shootout**. This is always a fun night, and it is a proven fact that anything can happen in the Shootout.

**Week 3** on the **16<sup>th</sup> of August** is the club **Singles Championship** for A Grade, B Grade and C Grade. This is your chance to go head to head with those of a similar level to yourself.

The Club Championships are open to **all MTTA members** who have played at least 3 rounds in the grade and have paid all appropriate fees. All players are given the best opportunity to take out one of the 10 awards on offer. Don't miss this chance to stretch your abilities and have some fun.

## STARS SHINE IN GEELONG

The **2018 ITTF Australian Open Platinum Tour** event has just concluded in Geelong, and It was a privilege to be able to watch the high standard of table tennis being played there. With crowds building throughout the week, the quarter-finals and semi finals played on the Saturday were very well attended, and the arena was totally sold out for the finals on Sunday.

While the main matches were of an extremely high standard, there were also things going on around the stadium to encourage participation. **Chris Addis** was able to have a hit with world number 20, **Quadri Aruna** and seemed to worry the Nigerian with his backhand attacks.



Courtesy of ITTF

In the Saturday semi-finals matches, Japanese come-from-behind whiz-kid, **Tomokazu Harimoto** couldn't come from behind when facing the might of **Xu Xin**, with the Chinese world number 6 taking the chocolates in an entertaining match, 11-5, 11-8, 9-11, 11-5, 9-11, 11-8. It was interesting, though, the number of times Xu Xin looked rattled and turned to his coach between points, while Harimoto simply charged on with the devil-may-care attitude of a 15-year-old doing something he loves.

The other Men's semi-final should have been a boring match between two lower ranked players, but nothing could have been further from the truth. World number 140 **Liu Dingshao** (no, I'd never heard of him either) took an entertaining victory over world number 257 **Yu Ziyang** (11-9, 11-3, 5-11, 11-8, 6-11, 5-11, 11-8).

The Women's semi-finals saw the cream rising to the top with **Liu Shiwen** victorious over Chinese qualifier **He Zhuojia** 4-2, and **Ding Ning** taking a surprisingly easy victory over **Kasumi Ishikawa** from Japan, 4 games to nil.

The Gold Medal for the Mixed Doubles was going to the **Korean Republic** no matter what happened. In the end it was **Lee Sangsu** and **Jeon Jihee** too strong for their compatriots, **Lim Jonghoon** and **Yang Haeun**, (6-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-8, 11-8).

And who would have thought that the Sunday Finals could have been so much better? The Women's Doubles Gold medal match saw the attacking **Mima Ito** and **Hina Hoyata** beating fellow Japanese defenders **Honoka Hashimoto** and **Hitomi Sato** (11-8, 11-9, 11-7). The scoreline doesn't do justice to the spectacle. Watching Mima Ito's timing and footwork more than made up for the one-sided nature of the contest.



Photo by Jess O'Dea

The Men's Doubles Gold medal match was also over quickly, but some of the rallies between **Jeoung Youngsik** and **Lee Sangsu** from the Korean Republic and their Japanese opponents **Masataka Morizono** and **Yuya Oshima** were amazing. The Korean pair took victory, 14-12, 11-5, 11-7, but again the match was of a higher quality that what appears on the scorecard.

This leads us on to the Women's Singles Gold medal match between the current world number 17 and former world number one, **Ding Ning**, and current world number 6 and former world number one, **Liu Shiwen**. And this is when the crowd came to life. We all expected a tough battle, and that's just what we got. Ding Ning's famous tomahawk and reverse tomahawk serves drew an audible intake of breath from the crowd, which I'm sure must have affected the flight of the ball, and the speed of the rallies was something that had to be seen to be believed. Liu Shiwen eventually took victory in a highly entertaining match, 11-5, 11-7, 3-11, 5-11, 6-11, 11-5, 11-6.



Photo by Jess O'Dea



Photo by Jess O'Dea

Which led us to what, on paper should have been a near walkover. World number 6, **Xu Xin** facing down world number 140, **Liu Dingshao**. It would seem, however, that someone forgot to tell Liu Dingshao that this should have been a near walkover, because he turned it into a match which those who saw it will remember for a long time.

The scorecard of 4 games to one (12-10, 4-11, 12-10, 15-13, 11-6) shows that Xu Xin eventually won the trophy, but Liu Dingshao won the respect of a packed stadium who will eagerly be watching his results in the future.

### **NO LOVE FOR SPIDER AND SNAKES**

There is a problem with the top tier of sports people coming to Australia. We know that we're a long way from anywhere, but there seems to be a certain lack of empathy for much of our wildlife, and this became apparent at the Australian Open.

In an interview situation, athletes need to be prepared for the unexpected question, but this simple enquiry seemed to leave many top-level table tennis players stumped. When asked for their favourite Australian animal, none could go past either the kangaroo or the koala, with the kangaroo winning by a slight margin.



But where is the love for our other creatures? None of them mentioned the great white shark, the blue-ringed octopus, the freshwater crocodile, the inland taipan, the aptly named death adder, or the soft and cuddly funnel-web spider.

So come on, table tennis officials. What about an education course on the wide variety of things worth a cuddle down under?

To quote from the song by the **Scared Weird Little Guys**, "*Come to Australia – You Might Accidentally Get Killed*".

## PULLING OUT AT THE LAST MINUTE SHOULD HAVE CONSEQUENCES

As previously discussed, the 2018 ITTF Australian Open was a magnificent event, but it was robbed of its major drawcards only weeks before the starting date and after the vast majority of tickets had been sold.

**Fan Zhendong (world # 1), Lin Gaoyuan (# 3), and Wang Chuqin (# 92)** of the Chinese Men's team, and **Zhu Yuling (# 1), Wang Manyu (# 2), Chen Meng (# 3), Chen Xingtong (# 7) and Sun Yingsha (# 29)** from the Chinese Women's team were some of the players who withdrew from the event stating that it was due to the upcoming Asian Games being held at the end of August in Indonesia. *Four weeks away.*

*Really?? Why?* Well, that's a good question. **Nine** of the **thirteen** Chinese Men's players withdrew. **Ma Long** stated that he was suffering from a knee injury. and **Zhang Jike** was still having problems with a back injury which saw him withdraw from the Korean Open held the week before, but the others offered no such explanation. **Six** of the **fourteen** Chinese Women who entered also withdrew stating only that it was because of the upcoming Asian Games, four weeks away. **Liu Shiwen, Ding Ning and Gu Yuting** from the Women's team are all in the mix to represent China at the Asian Games, and all of them found no reason to withdraw. Neither, for that matter did any of the men or women from **India, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Chinese Taipei** who are all eligible to compete in the same Asian Games.

So obviously many of the Chinese team forgot that the Asian Games were coming up? Well, no. The Asian Games come around every 4 years in a similar cycle to the Olympics and Commonwealth Games, and table tennis is one of the major sports. 45 nations will be competing over a total of 40 different sports. Imagine if a top line Australian sportsperson forgot that the Commonwealth Games was a few weeks away. No. Imagine if 15 athletes from the same discipline forgot that the Commonwealth Games were coming up in a few weeks time. It just wouldn't happen.



And what an embarrassment to **ITTF-Oceania** that their advertising for the tournament featured the very players who suddenly decided that they would be better off not attending the Platinum Tour event. It forced the advertising to be changed, with the new ads only appearing a week or so before the event started. But then that *new* advertisement featuring **Ma Long** also had to be replaced the day before the event started.

So I ask the questions;

- *Injury aside, what responsibilities do the players hold for stating an intention to play and then pulling out, knowing full well that they had the Asian Games coming up in four weeks time?*
- *What benefit is there in pulling out of the Australian Open when it could equally be used as a "warm-up" tournament?*
- *Would ticket sales have been as high if we knew that the numbers 1 & 3 men in the world, and the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 7 women in the world would not be attending?*
- *What can the ITTF do to stop this type of thing happening again?*

### TABLE TENNIS ON THE MOON

No clubs have yet been formed on the moon, but it is possible that in the future they might be. Table tennis played indoors on the moon could be very similar to the style and type of play we all know and love today, as playing indoors on the moon would also require artificial atmospheres. But venture outside and the game would take on a very different form.

Gravity on the moon's surface is *70 times less* than that on earth, which means that a ball hit with equivalent energy would travel 70 times as far. You would either need a table 70 times larger, or you would need to serve *very* softly. *70 times the size*. The table would need to be **191 metres** from end to end. When you consider that the MCG is 165 metres from end to end, that's quite a table.



And the game would be slightly different as well. Table tennis balls spin due to high and low air pressure. The spin creates high pressure on one side and low pressure on the other. A spinning table tennis ball will curve towards the low pressure side. As there is no air pressure on the moon, forget about looping... or backspin... or chopping... or tomahawk serves...

Table tennis on the moon would be very different because there's no atmosphere. I mean, no flashing lights, no music, no drinks. No atmosphere at all. And the cheese platter is all green...

### UMPIRING BLOOPERS

It was an umpiring mistake (yes, they happen) that cost **Angelica Rozeanu** the **1948 Women's Singles** title at the World Championships held in London.

Due to the farcical longest point played out years earlier, a time limit on each game had been introduced. Remembering that games were played up to 21 points back then, the time rule in play in 1948 was for each game to be a maximum of **20 minutes**. The umpire was required to warn players at the 18-minute mark that there were 2 minutes remaining.

In the semi-final match between Rozeanu and **Gizi Farkas**, the umpire failed to notify the players at the 18-minute mark and the match went to the 20-minute limit with the score at **22-22**. The umpire should have announced "*the next point decides*", but he didn't. Rozeanu won the next point, but the match was allowed to continue.

The confusion continued until, at **24-24** Rozeanu won the point, but the service was out of order. The scoring of this point should have given Rozeanu the match, but the umpire disallowed the point and insisted that it be replayed. At this point, Rozeanu had technically won the match *twice*, but the game was finally awarded to Farkas with the score at **29-27**.

The tournament director organised a jury of officials who declared the match "irregular" as it should have finished when Rozeanu won the next point at 22-22, but instead of awarding the match to Rozeanu, they ordered that the match be replayed the following day. Farkas won and went on to take the 1948 Singles final over **Vera Thomas** from England.

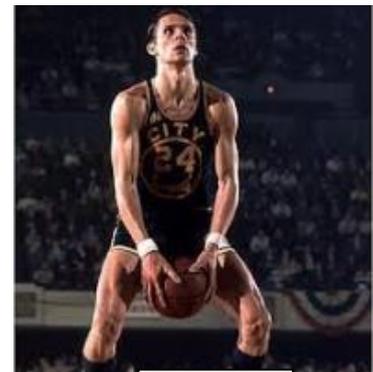
## ARE YOU AN UNDERARM OR OVERARM TYPE OF PERSON?

A few weeks ago, I was listening to one of my favourite podcasts. “*Revisionist History*” by **Malcolm Gladwell** looks at the forgotten and misunderstood pieces of history in a new light. In the episode I was listening to, he was looking into basketball history, with particular emphasis on shots taken from the free-throw line.

Now, I know that this is a newsletter about table tennis but run with me on this. I think it has some relevance.

The podcast was mainly concerning **Wilt Chamberlain** and **Rick Barry**, two names which should be familiar to basketball fans. Rick Barry played from **1965 to 1980** and had one of the most accurate free-throws in basketball, with a scoring rate of **89.98%**. The average for all players around that time was **76%**, so Barry was shooting well above that average. At the same time, Wilt Chamberlain was one of the best centres the game had ever seen, but his free-throw percentage was an appalling **51%**.

So what was the difference? Rick Barry threw from the free-throw line underarm, rather than the traditional overarm motion used by most players. He held the ball between his knees and, with a swinging motion, lobbed the ball into the basket.



Rick Barry

Barry convinced Wilt Chamberlain to try using the underarm shot in practice games and, lo and behold, Wilt’s free-throw percentage sky-rocketed to over **80%**. But come the main season, Wilt went back to overarm throws and his percentage dropped.

Why? Because the other players, including his own teammates ridiculed him for using the “*granny-shot*”. Chamberlain was so worried of what the other players would say about the style that he refused to do something that would improve his game.

Studies have now proven that the underarm throw is the most efficient free-throw technique, but only one current NBA player uses it. Rick Barry’s son, **Canyon**, now also plays in the NBA. Despite the experiences of his father, he refuses to shoot underarm for fear of what his teammates will say.

And my point with this story? What part of your game are you neglecting because it’s not “normal”? Are you not using a particular shot or not attempting a particular serve for fear of not getting it right or of being different? Are you not warming up properly because you don’t want to look “silly”? Are you ignoring what might give you an advantage because no-one else is doing it?

*Get over it.* Find what is going to work for you and just do it. Nobody laughed at Rick Barry when he was shooting at 90%.



## WHERE WE STAND RE-VISITED

I've written before about how the averages of the top 3 players of various countries compare, and where Australia was ranked within all of that (*Where We Stand* AtN July 2017), however that was when the old style rankings were in place. How have the figures been affected by the new rankings formula introduced late last year?

Well, **Australia** is a little bit better off. A year ago, the Australian Men were ranked 46<sup>th</sup> and have jumped up to 37<sup>th</sup>. Of course, **China** is still in the top position, and still followed by **Germany** and **Japan**. **England** have slipped 1 spot and are now at 14<sup>th</sup>. **Canada** have dropped a couple and are in 57<sup>th</sup>, but the **USA** have trumped a number of nations, jumping from 56<sup>th</sup> to 38<sup>th</sup> and are right behind us.

Last year's Women's rankings had **China** on top, followed by **Japan** and **Singapore**. This year, China and Japan hold position, while **Hong Kong** jumps up to 3<sup>rd</sup>, as Singapore slip from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Australia** were 40<sup>th</sup> last year and have jumped up a few to be 32<sup>nd</sup>. **England** have dropped from 28<sup>th</sup> to 38<sup>th</sup>, and **Canada** are smokin', moving from 47<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, but not smokin' as much as the **USA** who have catapulted themselves from 49<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>.

So why did I go back to take another look at these rankings? Well, I was wondering if I could apply an interesting theory I heard recently that all team sports can be divided into two groups; "*basketball type*" sports and "*soccer type*" sports.

The "*basketball-type*" sports are those where a single player can dominate. The rest of the team are mere bit-part players who only need to get the ball to the main player and let them do the rest. The "*LeBron James*" type of player.

"*Soccer-type*" sports can be defined as those where a total team effort is required. A good striker in soccer is invaluable, but if the eight or nine passes to get the ball to him are not perfect, the striker is left without a shot.

Which type of sport is table tennis? As an individual game it's really not relevant. But in a team's competition, I'd say that it's a "*soccer-type*" game. A great player should win their matches, but if the rest of the team all lose theirs, the contest is gone.

And then I had a thought. What if the main player of a country's team is struck down by injury or illness and the fourth-best player has to substitute. What happens to the rankings then? So I decided to re-do the list looking at the number's **2, 3, & 4**.

In the Men's, as you might expect, **China** are still on top. Taking out their number 1 and substituting their number 4 only drops their points average by **8%**. **Japan** lose the least in this exercise, dropping only **5%** of their average by substituting the best player with the 4<sup>th</sup> best, while **South Korea** and **Germany** both drop by **13%**.

**Australia** would drop **34%** by the change, but that's not bad compared to others. **Singapore** would drop **53%**, **Denmark** by **61%**, **USA** by **64%**, **Brazil** by **66%**, and **Kazakhstan** by **80%**.

On the Women's, there seems to be a greater difference between the team's best player and the rest. **China** are still on top. Taking out their number 1 and substituting their number 4 only drops their points average by **5%**. Surprisingly, **France** is the least affected, losing only **4%** in the change. **Japan** would lose **8%** of their points if they made the substitution.

The **USA** would drop by **34%**, and **Australia** would drop **39%** by the change, but that's not bad compared to others. **Sweden** would drop **51%**. The top player in **Canada** is **Mo Zhang**. They need to wrap her in cotton wool, because if she goes out, Canada would drop by **79%**.

Consistency is the key when playing any game. Having an outstanding champion is great, but in a team's competition, consistency over all players might be a better option. You don't need one champion representing your country; you need many.

### **AUGUST TOURNAMENTS**

It's a quiet month on the tournament scene.

On **Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup>** is the **Yarrawonga/Mulwala Junior Open**, followed by their Senior Open on **Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup>**.

On **Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup>**, **Shepparton** will be hosting their **Veteran Open**.

### **YOUR FEEDBACK**

This is **your** club and **your** opinions are valid and valued. If you have any comments to make on the contents of this newsletter, or if you have any suggestions or information for future editions please let us know.

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