



# **ACROSS THE NET**

## **Melton Table Tennis**

**September 2018**

**Edition 48**

### **CLUB CHAMPS WRAP, SERVING REMINDER, UNOFFICIAL UNDRRESS CODE AND, MUCH MORE**

If you're getting this newsletter for the first time, welcome. Our aim is to inform and amuse. If we success in one of those, we're happy. If we success in both, no extra charge.

In this edition we celebrate our Club Champions, give everyone a quick reminder about why we need to serve legally, look into a clothing issue, discuss diversity, and converse on cause and effect, amongst other things.

### **2018 MTTA CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS**

During the first 3 weeks of August, we ran our annual **Club Championships**, and what great nights they were. After many close matches, our **Handicap champion** for 2018 is **Sarah Lappin**, who defeated **Ed Menegol** in the final. Our records show that Sarah is the first female winner of the MTTA Handicap Championship.

In the second week we played our **Doubles Championship**, and we crown **Graham Huggett** and **Adam Farmer** as the winners over **Syed Ahmed** and **Sazzad Hossain**.

The third week of the championships saw the Singles titles and the Shootout being contested. Our **Shootout Champion** for 2018 is **Graham Huggett** who defeated **Clint Daulo** by a very narrow margin (obviously).

Our **A Grade Club Champion** for 2018 is **Matt Camilleri** who defeated **Clint Daulo** for the club's most prestigious award.

The **B Grade Club Champion** for 2018 is **Ebraam Ghobros** who defeated **Richard Dias** in the final

Rounding out the major awards, the **C Grade Club Champion** for 2018 was taken out by **Sharyn Ciberlin** who defeated **Ryan Dickie** to claim the prize.

Our congratulations go to all of these worthy winners.

### **WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH**

September is a busy time at MTTA. Our Spring Season has just started, and continues with only a couple of minor disruptions.

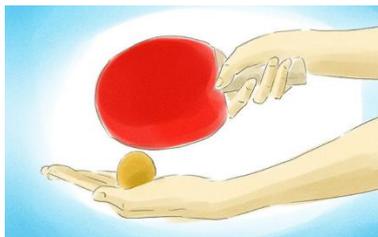
Our annual challenge match with **Sunbury Table Tennis** will take place on **Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> of September**. This is the night before the Grand Final Eve public holiday, so you can have a nice long sleep-in after the match.

These matches are always great competition and great fun. To be played again at Sunbury, we will be looking to redeem ourselves after last year's defeat. Make sure to register your interest in playing.

## **ARE YOU DOING IT RIGHT?**

Over recent weeks it has become apparent that there are players at the club who are either unaware of the service rule or choose to ignore it. While MTTA is fairly relaxed on these matters, if you want to improve your game and possibly move on to challenge matches or outside tournaments, you can be faulted for not serving correctly. The rules are clear. If you have any doubts about the legality of your service action, or if you want to improve your serves, you should speak to one of the club officials about it. But in the meantime, have a look at the details and reasons behind the rules.

The first section of the service rule states;



***Service shall start with the ball resting freely on the open palm of the server's stationary hand.***

The ball cannot be gripped by the fingers or hidden by the closed hand. It must rest perfectly visible on the open palm.

The next part of the rule states that; ***The server shall then project the ball near vertically upwards, without imparting spin, so that it rises at least 16cm after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck.***

This seems fairly straight-forward, but at club level it is probably one of the most ignored rules in our game. Simply speaking, the ball has to be thrown up at least 16cm (6 inches), or roughly the height of the net. ***It is not allowed to be struck straight off the hand.*** You can't strike the ball when it is on the way up. It must be falling. And it ***must*** be thrown up. You can't lift it up on your hand and then drop it. You must throw it up.

Part 3 is self-explanatory, so we'll skip to part 4 which says; ***From the start of service until it is struck, the ball shall be above the level of the playing surface and behind the server's end line, and it shall not be hidden from the receiver by the server or his or her doubles partner or by anything they wear or carry.***

So the hand with the ball freely resting on the palm must be *behind* the end of the table and *cannot drop lower* than the level of the table. Simple enough.

And the ball cannot be hidden from the receiver at any time from the start of the service action until it is struck. You are not permitted to hide it with your free arm, your body, your head, your bat, or your clothing.

Part 5 states; ***As soon as the ball has been projected, the server's free arm and hand shall be removed from the space between the ball and the net.***

Get your hand out of the way! It's as simple as that. This part is designed to make sure that you are not trying to hide your serve by using your free arm to block your opponent's vision.

Part 6 says; ***It is the responsibility of the player to serve so that the umpire or the assistant umpire can be satisfied that he or she complies with the requirements of the Laws, and either may decide that a service is incorrect.***

Do the right thing. That's what this means. And expect to be called for a bad serve if the umpire sees it is not correct. This rule continues, saying; ***If either the umpire or the assistant umpire is not sure about the legality of a service he or she may, on the first occasion in a match, interrupt play and warn the server; but any subsequent service by that player or his or her doubles partner which is not clearly legal shall be considered incorrect.***

So the umpire can call a let and warn you. If you decide to try your luck and do it again in the same match, you can be called for serving a fault and the point will be awarded to your opponent.

Part 7 doesn't really apply to anyone at the club at the moment, but states; ***Exceptionally, the umpire may relax the requirements for a correct service where he or she is satisfied that compliance is prevented by physical disability.***

If this needs to be done, the committee will inform players and officials at the time.

So let's all be aware that there are rules which govern the serve. No, we're not playing for sheep stations, but trying to do the right thing and playing within the rules of the game should be reward enough.

### **COMFORT ON THE COURT**

Let me talk to you about comfort. Some people like to wear a traditional sports outfit of shorts and shirt when playing table tennis. Some people prefer to wear track pants, or to pick and choose depending on conditions. Some bring specific shoes which they only wear for playing table tennis. Others just play in the same shoes they were wearing when they arrived at the court. You need to feel comfortable in whatever you wear... or don't wear.

I recently heard an interview with the Japanese world number **12, Jun Mizutani** where he revealed that most of the Japanese men on the World Tour don't wear underwear when playing.

This immediately raised two thoughts in my mind.

- 1/ I'll bet that changes your focus the next time you're watching a match with a Japanese player, and
- 2/ I must remember to buy longer shorts.



## DIFFERENT IS GOOD

The other day I was channel-surfing and came across a European Athletics competition. As usual, my mind started to over-analyse what I was watching and I found myself comparing it all to table tennis. Sound weird? Well, welcome to my brain.

I watched the javelin competition. Each competitor ran in with pretty much the same style, and threw the javelin with the same action. Then it was the hammer throw. Each competitor span around in the same fashion and released the hammer with the same action. In the discus, the long jump, the triple jump, the high jump, there only seemed to be one way of doing it right.

I flipped channels and watched some cycling. The pedals on the bike go up and down, up and down, up and down (*come on, sing it with me*) the pedals on the bike go..... All doing exactly the same thing, some just faster than others.

Then I watched some table tennis. Nothing and no-one was the same as anything or anyone else. Everyone is different. Forehand serves from the backhand side of the table, backhand serves from the forehand side, forehand serves from the forehand side. Add to that backspin, topspin, sidespin, no-spin, short, long, cross-court, down the line, pendulum, reverse pendulum, tomahawk, using shakehand or pengrip. And that's only the first shot.

Table tennis has got to be one of the most diverse sports on earth. How do coaches keep up with it? In most other sports you can teach a person to use the correct action, because there is only one correct action. There's only so many ways you can ride a bike. It's difficult to throw a javelin underarm. But table tennis.



Watch **Dimitrij Ovtcharov's** backhand serve where he crouches so low he almost disappears from view.

Watch **Kenta Matsudaira's** tomahawk serve so close to the side of his head he almost takes his ear off.

Watch **Mima Ito** and **Liu Shiwen** bouncing on their toes like they're playing on invisible trampolines. Are they all different? You bet. Are they wrong? Not if they work.



A couple of years ago, I had the privilege of watching the Victorian Para squad at their top secret training facility in the Essendon Football Club, 275 Melrose Drive, Tullamarine, between Mickleham Road and Airport Drive. While I was there, each member of the squad was asked to describe their starting position at the table, and to explain why they took that position. Each one had a slightly different position, and explained why that position was the best to take advantage of their particular strengths.

This made me realise just how different every table tennis player is. Look around our club and try to pick two players who serve exactly the same as each other. You won't be able to. And that's what's great about our sport.

In a time when we are encouraged to celebrate the diversity in our society, let's acknowledge and celebrate the fact that we are in the centre of a very diverse game; both in the players and in the styles of play.

## ATTRIBUTING CAUSES

How many times have you been beaten in a match by your opponent just clipping the top of the net and the ball dribbling over? How many times have you been beaten in a match by your opponent catching a lucky edge at a critical time? How many lucky breaks can people who play against you get?

But then, let's look at the other side of the coin. Remember the last time you beat that opponent? Didn't you play brilliantly? You were really on your game that night, weren't you? Couldn't have played better if you tried.

You, my friend, are suffering from the effects of **Attribution Theory**.

First espoused by **Fritz Heider**, an Austrian psychologist, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and since then expanded on by many others, Attribution Theory tries to explain the manner in which we assign causes to our behaviours and actions.

In its briefest form, Attribution Theory can be applied to table tennis as, "*I won the match because I was in the zone and played really well*" or "*I lost the match because of my opponent's luck in getting nets and edges*". You are attributing your success to an internal influence (your good play), and your losses to an external influence (your opponent's good luck).

But can it really be that simple? No. The theory is based on 3 parts:

- 1/ That the behaviour must be observed
- 2/ That the behaviour must be deemed as intentional
- 3/ That the behaviour must be attributed to either internal or external forces.

That the behaviour is observed is easy. Both you and your opponent are watching the ball. That the behaviour is attributed to either internal or external forces is the end result of that observation. But it's number 2 where this gets tricky.

If the behaviour is deemed to be intentional, it would mean that your opponent is *intentionally* getting the nets and edges. Now, we all know that we should keep the ball as low as possible over the net, and if playing a long shot or a wide shot that it should be either as long or as wide as possible, but *intentionally* getting nets and edges? I don't think so.

*Random occurrences occur randomly.* Your reaction to random occurrences defines your frame of mind for what happens after that. How do you react to the things that happen to you, whether they be positive or negative? Are you going to blame your opponent because something randomly occurred? This is what Attribution Theory is all about.

Can Attribution Theory be beaten? Not entirely. It's human nature. And you wouldn't want to totally wipe out the up-side of it. You did play well. You were on your game. But if things don't go your way you can minimise the effects of the down-side of Attribution Theory. Practice for the type of opponent you are likely to face. Be prepared for nets and edges. And if they happen, don't blame your opponent or beat yourself up about it. Keep a positive attitude. Just like the attitude you had with your last victory.



## **WORLD JUNIOR CIRCUIT COMES TO AUSTRALIA**

In a sign of the growing strength of table tennis in our country, the ITTF have announced that Australia will be added to the list of countries to host a round of the **ITTF World Junior Circuit**.

The ITTF World Junior Circuit is the only junior (under 18) & cadet's (under 15) regular table tennis tour for young up-and-coming stars to gain valuable experience playing with other top juniors from all around the world and prepare them for their senior's debut internationally.

The top 8 girls and top 8 boys on the 2019 World Junior Circuit standings will also be offered scholarships to promote and assist them reach their best playing level in the future.

The Australian leg of the tour will be held in **Darwin** from the **28<sup>th</sup> of April** until the **1<sup>st</sup> of May**, and will be broadcast live on the ITTV channel.

And let's not forget that the **2018 World Junior Table Tennis Championships** will be held in **Bendigo** in early December. With the land down under now hosting world championships and world tour events for Cadets, Juniors, and Seniors, table tennis is getting a real boost. Hopefully increased participation will follow.

## **SEPTEMBER TOURNAMENTS**

Internationally, there's a good one at the end of the month. On the **29<sup>th</sup>** and **30<sup>th</sup>** of **September** in **Chengdu, China** is the **ITTF Women's World Cup**. The ITTF World Cups are the second most prestigious events on the international table tennis calendar, where only 17 of the top table tennis players who have qualified through their respective Continental Cups, together with the current World Champion, one host player and a wildcard, can compete for the prestigious title that counts towards the Grand Slam Title (Olympic Games, World Championships, World Cup). **Oceania** will be represented by Australia's **Jian Fang Lay**.

Locally, on the **Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup>** at **Dandenong** is the **Victorian Closed Senior and Para Championships**.

The following weekend, on **Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>**, **Mornington** will host their **Veterans 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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