



NOVEMBER 2010

ISSUE 16

NEWS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

We are now in the 7th year of the Association and it is good to look back at what had been achieved: membership has risen steadily as newly qualified umpires become members: three annual tournaments have been held at different venues: an umpires seminar has been held and from reactions received it should become an annual event: fifteen editions of the magazine have appeared, this is number sixteen. Long may it continue!!

The English Open will be held in Sheffield in January 2011 and of the 23 umpires selected 21 are members of the association. I am sure of the problems which were apparent last year should not surface this year, even though there did not appear to be an abundance of applications. There will always be controversy regarding selection but it good to know that this year's selections were made by the NURC selection panel.

It is sad news about Alan Harwood, one of the ETTA's long serving umpires. Alan has been ill for some time and is currently in hospital in London. He was in intensive care recently and is now back on the ward receiving treatment. We all wish him well and hope to see him back on the circuit.

Many of you will remember Bill Lavis, an IU from yesteryear. He was one of our group of four, Harry Spraggs, Alan Harwood, a young Dave Edwards and me who travelled the country from Plymouth to Perth (and abroad) to umpire at events large and small. Bill sent me a letter which with his permission I have asked the editor to include in the magazine. It makes interesting reading.

The committee meet regularly and a variety of issues are reviewed. If you have an issue you would like discussed or grievance you wish to air please let the Secretary or me know. The Association is there to serve you.

George Tyler

Chairman

LETTER TO GEORGE FROM BILL LAVIS

Dear George,

Thanks for sending the AETTU magazines which I have received with great interest and have now downloaded the complete issues from your newly acquired web site. I shall now be able to keep up to date with the continuing future issues. I had to do a little research to find your web

site, would it not be beneficial to include it in your newsletters.

It has taken me some while to read all and get up to date. This has caused a delay in my replying to you earlier. I have found it interesting and impressive.

The tenacity shown by the determination of your association is inspiring and is beginning to make some headway. I wish you the success you deserve and hope irt time management will come round to the realization that the sport will survive and improve better if its members co-operated for the good of all. ("United we stand, divided we fall"). A hard lesson to accept, when each is trying to protect their departments. In this I believe you have set a good example for them to follow in that you are not over aggressive and too demanding being willing to communicate in a reasonable spirit of co-operation.

As you are in need of articles include in the magazine you may also include this correspondence if you wish. If you do, please give my good wishes to all the umpires that have known and worked with me in the past, I still fondly remember them.

Yours in Sport

Bill Lavis

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

Another season has started and hopefully everyone is fighting fit and full of enthusiasm to umpire. At the end of August the umpires' seminar was held at the Bulkington Centre. Nr. Coventry. The seminar was arranged by the AETTU in conjunction with the NURC and members of the NURC attended the seminar and gave presentations about various aspects on the Laws and Regulations and the role of the umpire. The ETTA also agreed to fund the seminar. About 40 umpires at all levels attended the seminar and it was very informative to experienced and new umpires. The ETTA has funding for the recruitment, training and development of umpires and it is hoped that the seminar will become an annual event before the start of each season. This years seminar was for umpires at all levels and continued development of all umpires is important, however, I suggest that the next seminar (hopefully 2011) should be geared towards local and county umpires and possibly there should be 2 seminars; one in the North and one in the South. This should increase the number of umpires who attend the event. As well as including the theory of laws and regulations the seminar should include role play by experienced umpires showing colleagues how to deal with setting up the court, good practice re: court management, misbehaviour, illegal coaching etc. I feel that the above suggestion would be of greater benefit to development and retention of the majority of umpires.

The 2011 English Open is taking place at Sheffield in January 2011. After last year's Open the Association submitted a report to the ETTA and Organisers highlighting areas for improvement involving the role of the umpire. The major problem was caused by an increase in contestants without an increase in umpires. At the 2010 event there were 38 umpires for the first 3 days and 32 for the final 2 days. The organisers have obviously recognised the problem because 48 umpires have been recruited for the first 5 days of the 2011 tournament and 40 for the final 2 days. Congratulations to the following English umpires who have been selected for the event:

5 Days.

David BROWN, Dennis CALVER, Stan CLARKE, David COCHRANE, Neil CURTIS, David EDWARDS, Margot FRASER, David GOULDEN, John Lawton, John MACKEY, Peter MAY, William MORAN, Tom PURCELL, Lynda REID, Derek SHERRATT, Michael STRODE and Robert WILLIAMSON.

3 Days

John HARDCASTLE, Alex MERCER, Michael PAYNE, Eric PENTLAND, Richard WALTERS and Brian W ATKINS.

The AETTU Tournament 2010 was held in the Wood Green TTC, Walsall in July. It was a very enjoyable event but unfortunately it clashed with the Doncaster GP which was re-arranged for the same date after it had been cancelled in January. About 20 players attended the AETTU tournament but in reality I feel that there should have been more participants. It's a fun week-end with many different standards of player but the main purpose of the event is to allow umpires to play table tennis and have an enjoyable week-end with colleagues. It is difficult trying to organise a suitable venue to suit the majority of umpires. You will never please all of the umpires all of the time. So far we have held the event in Grimsby, Derby and Walsall but finding a suitable venue at a reasonable cost with catering facilities is problematic. If you know of a suitable venue which holds about 8 tables please let me know asap.

Tom Purcell Secretary AETTU.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INVOLVING MEMBERS

On Sunday 21st November, Brian Watkins, together with Derek Sherratt and Derek's partner Joyce were driving home after umpiring at the National Cadet and Junior Championships at Hatfield, Hertfordshire. As they were travelling on the A41 near Aylesbury some idiot in a van decided to pull out of the line of oncoming traffic and collided head on with the car being driven by Derek. It was a very serious accident and Derek, Joyce and Brian had to be cut out of the

mangled vehicle. Luckily all three were wearing seatbelts and the airbags worked. Derek and Joyce received severe bruising from the seatbelts and airbags and were released from hospital at Stoke Mandeville the following day. Brian appears to have hit his chest against a drop down table on the rear of the front seat and as a result he has received a fractured sternum. He will be in hospital for a week.

Luckily, even though this was a very serious accident, Brian, Derek and Joyce have not received serious injuries. They will recover from the accident over the next few weeks and months and I know that all of you will send best wishes to them and wishes for a speedy recovery.

ALL THINGS TABLE TENNIS

Universally accepted; 'The Greatest Player to ever pick up a Table Tennis Racket'.

The freedoms allowed Jan Ove Waldner are not, and were not, permitted other players. As a Western European I viewed the great Swede as one of my own and delighted in his achievements. Bear though, however, to the implications to other nationals, of either gender, who would dare to express emotion and face expulsion from their team or worse.

Advances made in our understanding of Nutrition; how to fuel the body not only in competition-but in months and years of training, far outstrip that of the passed. The comforts gained from professional contracts, the help obtained from agents and other professional staff, were not available to previous generations. Fred Perry lost only one game in his 1936 Wimbledon Men's Singles Final: 6-0 6-0 6-1. He led the British Team to a string of Davis Cup victories and was the first global sporting superstar. There will be another, sooner rather than Later.

Richard Walters NU from Surrey.

LIVING ABROAD

They say that travel broadens the mind. I would be more inclined to say ; significant time spent abroad reduces the effect of tunnel vision, caused by a narrow field of view. But travel in itself is not enough. One must become a member of an (migrant population mixing with local people. A contributory social interaction opens one to alternate thought. The great advantage to living in an English speaking foreign land, such as North America, is that the immigrant population will have to converse in your language. When sitting at a dinner table for example, or discussing issues of importance or social lightness, a group will naturally be drawn to you because of your ease and confidence in conversation, often charmed and amused by the simplicity of all they find difficult. But may 1 also add that marriage to a foreign national, and

more elevated lifestyles, can contribute in a similar manner.

Richard Walters NU from Surrey

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
BULKINGTON VILLAGE CENTRE
2pm SUNDAY 1st AUGUST 2010**

In attendance: George Tyler (Chair), Derek Sherratt (V Chair), Steve Welch (Treasurer), Tom Purcell (Secretary), Stan Clarke (Ctte), Geoff Taylor (Ctte), Dave Goulden, Dot Macfarlane, Brian Watkins, Jim Kenny, Bill Moran, Russell Sutcliffe, Lillian Payne, Mike Payne and Lynda Reid

Meeting commenced 14.15 hrs.

1. **Chairman's Welcome.** The Chairman George Tyler, welcomed everyone to the 2010 AETTU AGM.
2. **Apologies.** Dennis Calvert, Margaret Calvert, Barry Granger, Nick Osland, Gill Smith, Tom Davies, Alan Harwood, Tim Jennings, Tim Harris, Les Allwood, David Edwards, John Lawton, Ken Elliott
3. **Minutes of AGM 2009.** Proposed by Bill Moran and seconded by Dave Goulden that the minutes be accepted as a true record. Carried.
4. **Matters arising.**
 - Action 1. Secretary to obtain and circulate details of ETTA insurance and restrictions. Details obtained and circulated to members
 - Action 2. Secretary to inform NURC re Ray Lavin's decision to resign as umpire. Completed.
 - Action 3. Secretary to highlight tie discrepancy to NURC. Completed. Action 4. Secretary to contact NURC re definition of "Umpire". Not complete- Ongoing Action 5. Chair to contact Vice Chair Competitions re NURC Minutes. Completed.
 - Action 6. Secretary to contact John Mackey re possible contents of Umpire's page on ETTA Website. Completed.

Stan Clarke referred to item 16 in the 2009 minutes which related to Selection for the English Open. He asked if the procedure had been clarified. SW informed the meeting that all the names of the umpires who had requested the Open had been supplied to a panel of Stewart Sherlock, Richard Scruton and himself. Each panel member had placed the list in a order for selection and the final list was selected by the organisers. SW also informed the meeting that the problem over

the shortage of umpires at the 2010 Open should not be repeated. The ETTA had stated that there would be an increase in umpires for the 2011 Open.

5. Chairman's Report.

Chair informed the meeting that the membership of the AETTU was increasing and he thanked everyone involved with the Committee and the membership. Chair advised the meeting that the Committee had decided to hold an umpire's seminar. It had been discussed by the NURC for some time but it was not being progressed. The AETTU had invited the ETTA and NURC to take part in the seminar and as a result the ETTA had agreed to fund the seminar and the NURC had agreed to give presentations on the Laws and Regulations. The seminar was open to all umpires and the Chair encouraged as many as possible to attend the seminar.

Chair reported that colleague Pat O'Byrne had passed away during the last year and congratulated Stan Clarke who had become a Vice President of the ETTA and Steve Welch who was the recipient of the Ivor Montague Award for services to table tennis. Chair thanked Geoff Taylor for producing the AETTU Magazine on a regular basis but reminded everyone that articles were required from more members.

Chairman's Report proposed by Bill Moran and seconded by Brian Watkins. Accepted and Carried.

6. Secretary's Report

The report was circulated prior to the AGM and the following articles were highlighted:

Secretary reported that 7 of the 8 current committee members had been in office since the AETTU was started in 2004 and there was a need for fresh blood. Members could be co-opted to the committee but there should always be more committee members than officers on a committee.

The AETTU had submitted to the ETTA and NURC re the running of the English Open In Sheffield in January 2010. The Open was the biggest TT event seen in England for years and while everything seemed to run smoothly up front there was chaos behind the scenes because there were not enough umpires. The AETTU had submitted a report on the Open identifying where the event had run smoothly and also areas for improvement. The report had been acknowledged by the organisers but they had not responded to the contents.

During the last year the NURC had considered changing the umpires' tie from blue to red to fall in line with the ITTF with the red tie having the ETTA logo. On your behalf I queried this with the NURC pointing out that the ITTF only recognised the ITTF logo. I have not received a reply from the NURC on this subject

At the National U11/12/13/14 tournament at Doncaster in May umpires travelled from all over the country to attend the Referee's briefing on the Friday evening. However the umpires were not given a meal allowance for the Friday evening. On behalf of the umpires Margot Fraser and

I discussed the problem with Sandra Deaton the tournament manager. She understood our concerns and agreed to pay a meal allowance for Friday evening.

Umpires and other Match officials travel in their own time to events. On occasions this is on a Friday when they are required to be at an event on the evening before a tournament begins, for a referee's briefing, so that they can start early the following morning. Friday travel often occurs during peak travel time for long distances and it is appropriate that umpires should receive a meal allowance for the Friday evenings for all events not just for National tournaments.

Sandra Deaton stated that she would raise the subject with the National Championships Committee and hopefully a satisfactory result will be achieved.

Secretary reported on the Seminar that is due to be held on 29th August at Coventry. It has been organised by the AETTU and the NURC have agreed to give presentations on the 2010 Laws and Regulations and other issues involved with the role of the umpires. It is hoped the seminar will become an annual event.

The AETTU website has been created. It will contain information relating to the AETTU and other TT issues. It will also contain copies of the AETTU Magazine and photos submitted by members.

Secretary reported that Jackie Williams from Wales had become the first Associate member of the AETTU.

Report Proposed by Stan Clarke and seconded by Dave Goulden. Unanimously accepted.

7. Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer submitted his report to the meeting. The Association finances showed a balance of £1395 at the end of the financial year. Membership had now increased to 89 members. A few members had dropped out of the Association because they were no longer active however, overall numbers had increased. Treasurer reported that that a number of members still had to pay their annual membership for the last year.

There was a general discussion on the report. Stan Clarke commented that although the accounts showed a balance of £1395 members should no be complacent because they did not show a true record of the AETTU expenditure. Committee members did not claim travel expenses when attending meetings and the Secretary did not claim expenses for paper and ink when preparing reports and correspondence on behalf of the Association. After a further discussion it was agreed that the Secretary should claim expenses for buying stationary and printer ink when preparing reports and correspondence on behalf of the Association. Treasurer informed the meeting that although there were a number of members who had not paid there current membership fees it was anticipated that the fees would be

collected during the year when members were seen at various tournaments.

Action 1. Secretary would contact members re outstanding membership fees.

Proposed by Geoff Taylor. Seconded by Russell Sutcliffe. Report accepted and carried.

8. Auditor's Report:

The treasurer reported that the accounts had been audited by John Mackey who was unable to attend the AGM. The Auditor did however forward an E Mail to the meeting confirming that he had audited the accounts and that they were in order.

Proposed by Dot Macfartane. Seconded by Bill Moran. Report accepted and carried. 9-12

Election of Officers:

9-12 Election of Officers

There had been no nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and the current post holders were therefore re-elected unopposed

13. Election of Committee:

Chair informed the meeting that Nick Osland had resigned from the committee due to work commitments. Geoff Taylor had intended to resign but after further consideration he had withdrawn his resignation and this had been accepted by the committee. The committee recommended that Jim Kenny be elected to the committee in place of Nick Osland.

Seconded by Dave Goulden. Carried.

Chair informed the meeting that Mike Payne and Lillian Payne had been co-opted onto the committee to assist with the functions of the committee.

14. Election of Auditor:

John Mackey was elected un-opposed

15 Magazine:

Geoff Taylor informed the meeting that the 15th issue of the AETTU Magazine had been circulated to members. GT advised that he had a regular number of contributors to the magazine but it was always good to receive articles from other members. TP raised the question as to whether the magazine should be circulated by e-mail to save costs on printing and posting. Dot Macfarlane advised the meeting that the magazine should be kept as a hard copy. The majority of members preferred it that way and it was easier to read and circulate to other persons. There was a general discussion on the magazine and it was agreed that it would stay as hard copy but be circulated by e-mail to Associate members. Chair thanked GT for his role as editor in preparing the magazine and its contents.

16. Website:

Secretary informed the meeting that the AETTU Website was now up and running. The site contained details about the AETTU, its Committee, Constitution and copies of the magazines. It will also contain photographs and links to other articles and sites of interest to AETTU members. The site can be found at www.aettu.btck.co.uk or by searching for AETTU on Google.

17. Training:

Chair informed the meeting that an umpires' seminar had been arranged for 29th August 2010 at the Bulkington Centre, Nr. Coventry. The Seminar had been arranged by the AETTU and the NURC had been invited to take part in the Seminar. The ETTA had also agreed to provide funding for transport and refreshments. TP informed the meeting that the Agenda had not yet been set but it would include the Laws and Regulations and areas where the umpires could improve their chances of passing the NU and IU badges. There was a general discussion on the seminar and Mike Payne recommended that the seminar should be an annual event. Bill Moran recommended that the seminar should also include a section on the new regulation re racket control. TP informed the meeting that he would take the recommendations for the agenda to Stuart Sherlock from the NURC who was arranging the agenda. TP also informed the meeting that Colin Clemmett would not be able to attend the seminar. Members were disappointed that CC would not be attending. His knowledge on the background to the Laws and Regulations would be missed.

18. Umpires' Tournament:

The AETTU umpires' tournament was held at Wood Green TTC, Walsall on 3/4th July 2010. The date had originally been selected because there were no tournaments recorded in the ETTA calendar, however, the Doncaster GP which had been cancelled in January because of snow was re-arranged for the same week-end of our tournament. As a result some umpires missed the AETTU tournament because of commitments to the GP. All the umpires who took part in the AETTU tournament had a good time and enjoyed an evening meal together in a local restaurant. There was a general discussion on the tournament and future sites. It was agreed that the event should be held at venues across the centre of England to allow umpires from North and South to have reasonable distances to travel.

19. Any other business:

a) Date for AG.M

Bill Moran raised the subject of attendance at the AGM and suggested that more members would attend if it was held on the same week-end of the tournament. There was a general discussion on this subject. Derek Sherratt pointed out that the tournament usually

started about 13:00 hrs on Saturday with a full afternoon and Sunday the competition ending about 6 o'clock. DS did not consider it timely to have the AGM in the morning before the tournament. There was always a committee meeting before the AGM. Other members contributed to the discussion but it was agreed that the AGM would stay on a different date to the tournament.

b) Data protection

Russell Sutcliffe asked about umpires' personal details held by the ETTA. He pointed out that the new individual programme obtained lots of personal details about players. In addition the NURC recorded personal details about umpires. RS asked if all the records were kept and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act. After further discussion it was agreed the Secretary would contact the ETTA re personal details held by the ETTA. Action 2: Secretary to contact ETTA re personal details held by the ETTA.

c) BTTAD

Steve Welch informed the meeting that the BTTAD is to hold an Open Disabled Tournament at Sheffield on 14th to 17th September 2010. This will be a major event in the calendar and a large number of umpires will be required. SW asked members to keep the dates clear in their schedules.

20. Date of 2011 AGM. To be arranged

THE BIRTH OF THE BLUES by DEREK SHERATT

It came as quite a surprise to find myself described as a 'white badge umpire'. This happened about 10 years ago; it may well have been in existence before that but it did not have much significance to me.

I had proceeded on that well worn path from County through National and now reached the dizzy heights of International umpire. I was at the peak of my umpiring career.

At least I thought I was. The first indication that something was not quite right came in the autumn of 2002. I forgot where I read it, but the startling news reached me that following a seminar in the Netherlands which preceded a Pro Tour event, 17 of our international colleagues had passed a further exam and would now be assessed, evaluated, some such checking process, prior to them reaching an even higher goal.

Enquiries within the English at first produced a good deal of head shaking and a general consensus emerged that 'this was something we need not worry our pretty little heads with'. Shortly after it emerged that one of the seventeen was indeed a 'bluecoat'.

A change of mood and interest was immediately apparent. What is this new system? Can we

attend a seminar? How does one enter, or take part? The response from our *'august body'* was not helpful. An ITTF release towards the end of 2002 cleared up the mystery. The 'Blue Badge', not the one which allows parking on yellow lines, had been born. I was indeed a 'White Badge' umpire.

It came to pass however that I was due to travel to Italy in April 2003 for the European Championships, and a quick call to the ITTF Switzerland, courtesy of Ian Marshall, established the fact that there would be no seminar or evaluations in Couremeyer. They were however able to assure me that the opposite was the case in Paris a month later, where the World Championships were to be staged.

So it had happened that I had booked a holiday in Paris which took in the Worlds, so the next step was a note to Colin Clemmett asking him if it would be possible for me to attend. After a short delay Colin replied, yes, but he would also give other interested parties the same treatment.

In the event six attended the seminar, Ken Armson MBE, Stan Clarke, Eric Pentland, John Mackey Bill Moran and myself. It was at this time that the, some would say, unseemly scramble really began for selection to officiate at events which, you guessed it, were holding evaluations. Eventually the inequality was recognised and a seminar was held in this country; the scramble was now on 'bigtime'.

Since that time the BB, as it has been labelled, has passed into folklore, bringing with it a good seal of resentment, some uninformed criticism as well as some justified comments. At its best it provides an additional incentive to progress, to seek excellence. The converse argues that it is decisive and enforces the long held belief that it favours the financially better off umpires who can afford or indeed wish to partake in foreign travel.

I was prompted to put my thoughts on this topic down in black and white because there seemed to be a lot of woolly thinking about the origins of the BB. Fortunately, after a brief conversation at the AGM, Andy Seward was able to fill in some of the blanks. Most will be aware that Andy was willing guinea pig at the seminar in Holland referred to above, subsequently becoming one of the first English umpires to hold the new qualification.

Andy in fact describes the unease and trepidation with which he faced this new challenge. He particularly remembers the first evaluations and his meeting with Albert and Bertius, early pioneers of this new breed. Since that time a number of English umpires have proceeded down this path.

Since its inception some 200 umpires from around the world have successfully undertaken the journey, and, as in any judgemental system, there is bound to be critical analysis of the procedures and astonishment expressed, as each graduation list appears. Likewise many fine umpires have, for various reasons, declined to follow this path.

The important thing is for people responsible for selection matters recognise the merits or otherwise of an umpire's ability and experience, thus reducing the chances of undue criticism.

MEMORIES OF UMPIRING ABROAD AS TOLD BY MIKE PAYNE

When umpires gather it is usual to recount experiences from trips abroad. These should keep Geoff going for years. One story goes back to when Brian Watkins and I as CU's used to travel all over the country with Tony Chatwin and Arthur Morgan. Arthur's first trip as an IU was to Germany and he was impressed by the fact that on the first day all the umpires knew him - as he came into breakfast everyone called out 'Morgen'. I thought it was funny first time round anyway.

I went with Pat Archdale to Topalchany in the Czech Republic for the European Youth. We met at Heathrow and decided how we would operate for the 2 weeks. I would look after all the formal parts - officials, money, timetables etc. and she would deal with anything involving people. We had not met before but from the stories I had heard about Pat it was an obvious way to operate. It worked as I found out in the first twenty minutes. Pat had 2 cases so being a decent cove I carried one of them and it was seriously heavy. 3 days into the event Pat met up with a Belgian umpire who was keen on detective stories. You can guess that the case I carried was stuffed with books for this umpire.

Expenses took a few days to come through and when I came out of the office with it there was Pat in deep conversation with a local. He moved off quickly when I came up and Pat remarked that he was a nice man but obviously a black market money changer. The main thrust of the umpire briefing was to be aware of these people! The money was useless anywhere else and I bought a pair of shoes in Tesco, a leather purse for Lilian and a hand saw and mitre box which has since come in handy

On the free day all the umpires went to the local brewery as you would expect. A bottle of very decent beer was about 25p with a deposit on the bottle. The brewery MD showed us around and described everything in Czech of course. There was plenty of food and drink and then the Hungarians brought out their accordions. They played 'roll out the barrel and all the other WW1 soldiers' songs and sang them in English and their own language. Pat was delayed and came out of the party room smiling holding a tie. Her husband collected ties and she had overcome the language problem to carry off the brewery MD's tie!!

Transport was very unreliable and the crush for seats was inevitable. I never bothered pushing for a seat because Pat always had the front pair saved for her by the Czech coach Kucharski even to the extent of him turfing out any players who dared to sit in them. Going

to the centre was a new experience for us. On board came several policemen and we had 4 outrider motorcycles with flashing lights and sirens. The lights were always green and woe betide any car that did not go onto the verge as we swept by. A few days in the front seat of the bus and to all the players and officials we were variously Mr Archdale or Mrs Payne which confused those who really did not know our names.

Looking at my list of topics I think I could double the size of the story but perhaps it would be better to leave that for a few weeks. There was also a table tennis tournament going on at the same time.



EXPEDITE EXPERT

At the VETTS Midland Masters, Alex Murdoch volunteered to umpire the over 60's Women's Singles Final. As he passed my seat, I thrust into his hand a stop-watch because the players were Penny Perry and Maggie Welsman. At 5 - 4 in the second game, time was called and I leapt up from my chair to act as stroke counter.

The match went to 11- 9 in the fifth. At least 3 points were counted out (without the players stopping playing). All I could fault in the umpiring were minor details in the announcements. Has any umpire done a longer expedite in the last year, or should we have a special award for such a special exhibition of the umpiring art

Lynda Reid.



EUROPEAN NOTES by Lynda Reid

I went alone to the European Championships in Ostrava, Czech Republic in September. I cannot recommend this as a holiday destination, but I would like to share a few items of interest with those considering applying for a major event like this.

1. **You are not alone.** If your hosts fail to meet the early morning plane from the capital city, take the opportunity to talk to the President of the European Table Tennis Union (when he is not on the phone to the organisers). It may take less than an hour for mini buses to arrive.
2. **Plan ahead.** Do not be surprised if the transport that turns up at the umpires' hotel (on time) is a seven seater mini bus. It is rare for more than a dozen teams of umpires to be needed at the same time.
3. **Take your Clubcard.** You are never far from a Tesco (about 5 minutes walk).
4. **Don't grumble, act.** By the end of the team matches (day 5), there had been 53

named reserve slots. Of the 29 pairs of foreign umpires, 6 were never reserve. Five of these six were still not reserve during the first 2 days of the individual events. By this stage, my partner and I had been reserve for 3 team matches and 6 individual matches, including 18.05 to the end of play (22.15). I pointed out to the Umpire Manager that the last session was not possible as we were going to go for a meal. I then presented to the Referee a brief written analysis of the distribution of reserve slots. Next day we were given 3 matches on show courts. Later we did a men's singles quarterfinal and the women's singles final (but we were the only pair to be reserve twice on the final day).

Seriously, anyone who has not been to this style of event will be surprised how little time you may spend umpiring. It is a good chance to watch some table tennis, chat and go sightseeing (if there are any sights to see). And you will come home with yet another set of cards and a heavy net gauge.

.....

Some Unusual Observations

1. I have put these notes together in the sincere hope that my advice and suggestions will be of benefit to my fellow umpires.
2. They are my own thoughts, and whilst I hope they will gain wide approval, the main purpose is to promote debate.
3. What I have attempted to do is to set out in a somewhat chronological order, and trying to avoid any reference to Laws and Regulations, the sequence of events beginning with the receipt of the match sheet from the Referee's table.
4. Umpires are often reminded that all players come to court with a clean record (except of course in a team match where penalties have already been given in the match) When you examine the names it is sometimes impossible to forget, or someone will remind you "You will have to watch that so and so" or "he is the one who did such and such at whatever last month". This to my mind is virtually impossible, it is a bit like the Judge telling the Jury to disregard some evidence that they have just listened to.
5. Study the names on the match sheet. If there are numbers, life is a bit easier, but double check. Point to the names and verify; do not take the numbers as an absolute truth. Richard Scruton recounts an episode in the European Youth Championships when the numbers were mixed up by the team members leading to all manner of problems for the Referee.
6. In my early umpiring days my colleague was given a match that included the recently crowned European Champion, John Hilton. When John approached the table my colleague politely asked him who he was. Now John famous for his repartee was a bit

miffed and retorted "Wait till your famous and I'll forget your name".

7. Getting names wrong is not new. It's pretty easy when it's Drinkall versus Knight. It's a bit different when it's Tsaptsinos against Burbulecic and you are still in England. I use an old trick, particularly in doubles, of making a note of some noticeable characteristics, such as 'tall player, shirt colour'. Add this to the phonetic pronunciation of names that you are not familiar with, and you are getting there.
8. A year or two ago I was officiating in a two man match between Denmark and Sweden, countries that share many names. It was only during the doubles, the third match of the tie that I realised that I had the names the wrong way round. At the end of the match I had no alternative but to sheepishly report it to the Referee and rewrite the entire score card.
9. Clearance of the court and what I like to call dressage should be second nature to all umpires. Get the barrier straight, push bags away from the barriers, remove clothing or towels and generally tidy up. I also like to check the floor for litter and of course for health and safety reasons. It is surprising what you might find. Wander around the court and look at the sight lines just as if you are going to play.
10. At my first National, anxious to impress all about me. I was disturbed to see the referee striding in my direction. Oh Lord! He is coming into my court. He strode past me and proceeded to switch on the lights for a number of adjacent courts.
11. We are asked to welcome the players into the playing area. At the higher level this will probably be a handshake and hello. For most it will be simply be the latter. It is tempting sometimes, if you happen to know the player, to say something like "Is your dad here?" or "Not you again!". Of course there has to be some dialogue to ascertain if they have an advisor or ask them to adjust their dress or playing number. Physical contact is a non starter. Quite apart from questions of improper conduct the wrong message is being given. Players are entitled to be assured that you are totally impartial.
12. For the toss, stand as close to the net as possible and wait until you have the attention of the players. Remember to give both the players the opportunity to make a choice and clearly indicate the start of the two minutes practice.
13. The quality or otherwise of the serve is the source of most problems and in tournaments involving less able players we are occasionally instructed to show a higher degree of tolerance. The problem is that in accepting something substandard from a perceived weaker player we can affect the balance of a match. I have

witnessed examples of the lesser player gaining in confidence at the expense of the better player resulting in an unexpected win. The danger here is that at some point a parent, coach or even a spectator may raise questions about a serve. To my mind this scenario places the umpire in an invidious position and calls into question the competence of the umpire which may well be unjustified. Nevertheless it is how to deal with the situation that has arisen? To be seen to take action simply because of the intervention of a third party is something to be avoided, but on the other hand you can hardly ignore it. The first thing to determine; certainly in your own mind, is 'is there substance to the complaint?' This is a case that you will be damned for if you do and if you don't. I would guess that in the majority of cases the intervention cannot be ignored.

14. You are then left with a damage limitation exercise. Adopting the advice given under the heading 'behaviour' in the umpires Handbook where I quote "it is impracticable to lay down precise rules". Another quote advises "avoid over re-action". So on one hand it would be wrong to immediately be seen taking punitive action, but given there is a case to be answered. What is to be done?

15. I have to admit that these sorts of incidents figure high on my list of pitfalls. To be put in this position, possibly through one's own lack of action plays havoc with my ego. Solutions are of course not absolute; a quiet word with the player or coach is often all that is needed

Behaviour is of course a major factor in umpiring and whilst consistency is important we are all likely to reach our melt down point at different times. We are reminded that once the system has been kick started i.e. a warning has been given then yellow and red/yellow card system follow; the implication being that the umpire should be wary about taking premature action. I have found that when a player misbehaves he/she will try to avoid eye contact, probably in the belief that the umpire will ignore or even forget the incident. In most cases the offender will, before play resumes, eventually glance in my direction. This is where I use my diabolical stare. It does not necessarily mean that you are not still on a collision course but you know they are aware that you are on the ball. However, it can be done surreptitiously and it does not make a mountain out of a molehill. The Mayor will probably never notice and one hopes that the Referee has taken due note of this covert action.

16. My final point is regarding the instruction not to write the score down until you have witnessed the players return to their coach. This can break one's concentration resulting in errors on the score sheet and I for one have fallen foul of this.

Derek Sherratt. IU from Staffordshire.

A LITTLE PIECE OF HISTORY

This article was taken from Table Tennis September 1948 The official magazine of the English Table Tennis Association.

PARKER'S "PING-PONG"

All enthusiasts know a little of the game's history from official hand books and programmes. Here Harry Miles adds some interesting information from a book written when even ping-pong was in its infancy.

I was looking through a pile of old books which I was going to send to salvage the other day. I came across one called "Ping-Pong - The Game and How To Play It", by Arnold Parker, Queen's Hall Champion. It was published in 1902 by T. Fisher Unwin. I picked the book up and began to read about Ping-Pong. Mr Parker begins by stating this is his first book on the game. "Ping-Pong" is a game that has been jeered at and called ridiculous, and articles have recently appeared in the Press which even go as far as to say that the popularity of this game has attained and the fascination it exercises over strong men, as well as over women, is a sign of decadence in the people in this country."

The author goes on to explain why Ping-Pong has become so popular. Firstly, it affords amusement for hours together and requires no small amount of skill to play it well. Secondly, a great deal of exercise is obtainable from the pursuit of this game. And last, but not least, there can be no doubt that the fact of ladies being able to play almost as well as men, is one of the chief reasons for its popularity.

The chapters to beginners are justified because, "It is only during the last few months that it has sprung into popularity. Therefore there are but few players who have played more than one year and the vast majority have only played a few months, and must therefore rank as beginners."

* * * *

The qualities necessary for good play are listed as good nerve, sound judgment, resolution, temper under control, fair sight and sympathy between hand and eye. Mr Parker gives the earliest of mention of Ping-Pong as being 1881, when it was played with cigar-box lids for bats, champagne corks for balls and rows of books for a net. "Most players seem to agree that the game was started by Mr James Gibb in 1899, and was published at his suggestion by Messrs. J. Jacques and Son under the title of Gossima, changed in 1890 into the name which has met with universal approval, namely Ping-Pong."

The game seems to have been in existence as Table Tennis before Gossima, but as Table Tennis it was played with a small india rubber ball like a lawn tennis ball. "But the game found little popularity, nor did it under its new title (Ping-Pong) until the present seamless

Xylonite balls were invented and placed on the market." This was about Christmas 1900. "For the next few months, everyone, more or less, played Ping-Pong, but summer coming on induced most people to put the game away until the present winter. The boom started about September. Clubs were formed everywhere. A tournament was held last December at the Royal Aquarium, Westminster, for the Table Tennis Championship of London. The entry was enormous, between two and three hundred. Partly as a result of this the Table Tennis Association was formed and about the same time the Ping-Pong Association sprang into being."

"The height of the Ping-Pong boom" states Mr. Parker, "was reached during the tournament at the Queen's Hall." The Press wasn't altogether favourable. One report said, "The Ping-Pong game is smaller in every respect than Table Tennis and strikes the onlooker as less scientific.... the scoring is confusing." Actually the table and scoring were the same in both games. Another report commented that "*a white waistcoat makes the ball invisible to the opponents.*" The fact that a little boy (aged 16 years) could compete with adults at the game it cited as a matter for scorn. The author of the book mentions the improved play. "*The stonewallers, though prominent were not so pre-eminent as on the first occasion*" The book goes on to deal with the implements necessary for good Ping-Pong. The room should be well ventilated and all furniture should be covered or put away. "*As it is most irritating to play under a flickering light, either electric light or incandescent gas burner should be used.*" The size of the table should be between five feet six inches and ten feet long, between three feet and five feet wide. *Although many players assert that they get a finer game on a table twelve feet long.*

A FEW THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITOR

It is not very often I have room to write in the magazine but now I find a bit of space I thought I would like to give you a few thoughts on what I think I would like to see change in the game. The idea now that all umpires have to have a meeting to hear the referee's directives of how he wants the tournament run. Fine. I have no qualms about this, but I cannot understand why the referees do not get together and write a standard letter for all tournaments because Rules and Regulations apply to most, if not all, of the tournaments that umpires officiate at. Then when the meeting is held on a Friday-Saturday it would mean that the only things the referee would need to talk about is what he wants and would not need to be telling umpires to "make sure the surrounds are in place", "make sure there are no towels on the surrounds", and so on. I have been umpiring on the circuit for 42 years and I really do not need a referee to tell me these things because these are the first things I learnt to do when I was a County umpire and they come naturally to me.

In Derek's article "Some unusual observations" he mentions "in tournaments when there are less able players we are sometimes instructed to "show a higher degree of tolerance". I find this strange. I did not know there were different rules for not so good players. I will hold up my hand and say I play in my local league and some of the serving is shocking. I do not fault them but I do have a word with the younger players telling them that if they want to go further in the game they will certainly have to learn the right way to serve and try to show them. With some of the older players it is almost a waste of time telling them as some have been playing for almost as long as I have and you would never get them to change so you accept it or spoil an evening's entertainment. I remember a few years ago I did a tournament for disabled youngsters. They hardly knew how to hold a bat let alone serve, and there WERE two youngsters who won about two points between them. I gave them both points and at the end of the game I said to one of them that he had won and to the other he had lost and they both raced back to their families both with broad grins on their faces. The parents came up to thank me and it gave me a feel good factor. I bar many people in my time World, European Champions and so many other world players and then those like the-two youngsters. I have enjoyed every year the I have been umpiring.

I have in my possession a blue blazer which in my opinion must have shrunk a fair amount as it now seems no longer to want to go around it is about a 42" chest. I do not go to any tournaments now and have no further use for it now if you are interested in it if you speak to Tom Purcell I will give it to him at our next committee meeting and you can sort it out with him. (The condition of it is not too bad).

I was one of the first people to join the AETTU and I have never regretted one day of it and I am sure I will stay a member as long as they take my subscription. One thing I would like to say before I run out of paper is that it would be nice to see more people contributing to the magazine and also to try and take part in all the activities you have organised by the committee. Remember Derek has asked for debate on his article and it would be nice to fill up a couple of pages in the next magazine with plenty of members not all agreeing with him but put any arguments you have to him.

Finally I hope Derek, Joyce and Brian recover quickly to get back into the fold.

PLEASE NOTE MY NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS IS:

geoff.taylor4@gmail.com