



ACROSS THE NET

Melton Table Tennis

March 2019

Edition 53

STUFF GOING DOWN, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES, COFFEE OPPORTUNITIES, DANGEROUS DANCING

In this edition, I look back on something I didn't see coming, we talk about new chances to train and get coaching, congratulate Milly yet again, introduce our World Champion players, and discuss why table tennis is safer than dancing.

YOU DON'T GET RID OF ME THAT EASILY

Most of you were there and saw what happened on the evening of the **21st of February**. And much has happened to me since. For those that missed the action, I was suffering from an undiagnosed medical condition. A heart murmur. I had no idea why, on that night my vision suddenly went blurry and I got lightheaded.

I now know that there was no blood getting to my brain (yes, I've got one). My collapse and revival are events which I can't comment on, as I have no memory of them at all. I've been told that I was not breathing and had no pulse for about 4 minutes. The next thing I can remember is sitting on the floor, being supported, and feeling pretty stupid that I had created so much fuss.

I'm writing this from hospital while awaiting open heart surgery to replace a faulty valve and have a blocked artery bypassed. Once recovered enough, *I'll be back*.



In the meantime, I would like to thank the people who revived me; **Robyn Koch, Phil Jenkins, Graham Huggett, and Chris Blake**. Also, many thanks to those who assisted in other ways. I've yet to hear all of your stories, and I'm looking forward getting all the different perspectives. To everyone who has sent messages of support on social media or via other friends, I thank you. The support I've received has been wonderful, and I'm sure I'll be more than a little emotional when I get back to the club.

I would like to point out that *this was not an accident caused by table tennis*. The sport is not to blame. The fault was in my body, and will be repaired by the marvellous facilities provided by medical science and dedicated professionals working in that field.

The next edition of *Across The Net* will include a fully factual and historically correct version of the events of the night written by Graham Huggett (I seriously can't believe I've written that).

I look forward to seeing you at the hall as soon as I am able to get there.

WHEN RACKET SPORTS MEET

As you would be aware, MTTA has had difficulty in providing training facilities due to the restricted hours we have at the hall on Thursday nights. However, this will soon change due to a partnership being formed with a local racket sport business.

Melton Table Tennis have been given access to space at the **Melton Squash Courts** to conduct coaching and training, initially on **Tuesday nights from 7:00pm to 9:00pm**. These sessions will not be for competition or social play, but will be an opportunity to practice and receive coaching on aspects of your game which you feel you need help with.

The training sessions will be run by the club's Development Officer, **Chris Blake** together with Level 1 coach, **Chris Addis**, and other assistants.

Karen and **Richard** from Melton Squash Courts have also made their clubrooms available to us, so there will be a place to relax and mingle at the end of the session. Melton Squash Courts is also the home of **FluoroCity**, the place to play in the dark under UV lighting.

If you are interested in attending these sessions, you will need to contact **Chris Blake** at the club to register your interest. Prices and starting dates for the training sessions will be announced shortly.

MORE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

There is a local project promoting my two favourite things; table tennis and coffee. **Christ Church, Melton** will be providing the opportunity to drop in for a *barista-made* coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. Toasties and drinks will also be available. Add to this the chance to practice table tennis, and even get some coaching from a qualified coach, and you've got the perfect lead-in to the weekend.

Operating every **Friday**, the barista will be in attendance from **8:00am to 10:00pm** (no, that's not a misprint. 8 in the morning to 10 in the evening). Table tennis will be available from **10am to 10pm**.

They will also be running sessions from **9:00am to midday** on **Saturday's**, focussed on Junior training and development. The barista will also be in attendance during the Saturday morning sessions as well.

Christ Church, Melton is located in **Unitt Street**, right beside the Melton Primary School, and behind the council offices. For more information, speak to **Graham Huggett** at the club.

NEW CEO FOR TTV

As reported in the last edition of *Across The Net*, **Dennis Makaling** has resigned from the role of **CEO** at **Table Tennis Victoria**. His replacement has now been found, and **Ritchie Hinton** has begun work in the role.

Ritchie spent 3 years training with **Leeds United** junior squad before moving on to study and practice law. He later worked as a **Talent Manager** and **Player Agent**, licenced by **FIFA**. Ritchie's most recent job was as the **National Field Manager**, responsible for transitioning participants from entry level and through the junior pathway for **Cricket Australia**.

I'll make no comment about the future of sandpaper bat tournaments. That would be beneath me.

MILLY GETS THE GONG

For a record sixth time, **Melissa Tapper** has received the **Arthur Wilks Award** for the **Australian Para Table Tennis Athlete of the Year** for **2018**. The award, presented annually since 2012 is named in honour of **Arthur Wilks OAM**, one of the great supporters of para table tennis over many decades.

Melissa has taken home the trophy in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2018. The only other recipient of the award is South Australia's **Sam Von Einem** who won the 2014 and 2016 trophies.



Melissa has also been named as the **Victorian Female Athlete of the Year** for **2018**. What a fantastic achievement from a fantastic person.

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES

Table Tennis Australia have announced that the **Croydon and District Table Tennis Association**, based at the Kilsyth Leisure Centre, and **LOOPS Table Tennis** centre in West Sunshine have been named as National Training Centres.

Through an agreement, the **TTA National Squad (able-bodied and para)** will train at Croydon and at Loops multiple times per week. Croydon has already played host to National Squad training since 2017 and this agreement formalises an already strong relationship.

These are the first of many planned National Training bases around Australia. TTA has started dialogue with all State and Territory Associations around establishing ongoing training environments.

AUSSIES NAMED FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Australian team to play at the **2019 Table Tennis World Championships** in **Budapest, Hungary** have been named, and three of the squad of four are Victorians.



Competing in the Men's competition will be **Heming Hu (VIC)** pictured left, and **Kane Townsend (NSW)**, while in the Women's competition, Victorians **Jian Fang Lay** (below left) & **Melissa Tapper** (below right) will be wearing the green and gold.



The Championships will be held from the **21st** to the **28th** of **April** and will feature Men's Singles, Women's Singles, Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles. Kane and Jian will team up for one of the Mixed Doubles team, with Heming and Melissa filling the places in the other team.



To be eligible to compete, a country must have had at least one player or team competing in the preceding Continental Championship for their region. 149 of the 226 National Associations which make up the ITTF have qualified to enter teams in these World Championships.

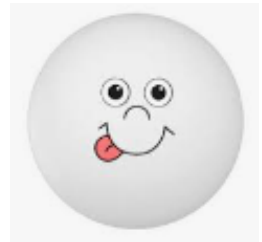
LET'S TALK BALLS

It's hard to imagine playing table tennis without balls. In fact, any ball sport is made that much the more pleasurable when balls are involved. Have we all stopped snickering yet? Good... then I shall begin.

When whiff-whaff, ping pong, gossimer, and the other variations of the game we play were first invented in the late 1880's, the balls were made of a variety of different materials, including cork from the champagne bottles frequently drunk during play. It took many years before someone came up with the idea of using celluloid to create a lightweight, durable ball.

From the early 1900's, and for nearly a century, the 38mm celluloid ball was king. There were a number of manufacturers, and quality varied based on the method of manufacture, and the desired marketplace.

The first major change noticeable for the average player and spectator was the move from 38mm balls to 40mm. While this sounds like a very minor change, adding 2mm to the diameter slowed down the flight of the ball through the air, which was designed to make it easier to follow for spectators and, hopefully for television audiences.



The next major change happened only a few years ago when the ITTF deemed that the material of the manufacture should be changed from celluloid to plastic. Part of the reason for this change was the fact that celluloid is extremely flammable. Have you ever tried putting a match to a celluloid table tennis ball? Please don't. It got to the stage where no airline in the world would transport the celluloid balls, and shipping companies were considering a ban as well. Plastic balls don't combust. They just melt.

Well, when the decision was made, you would have thought that the sky had fallen. Many (including myself) were extremely skeptical about the change, and who it best benefitted. The quality was so bad that the USA Table Tennis Association delayed their introduction into American tournaments by 12 months to give them time to improve. And I'm still not convinced that the wives of certain people who had just happened to invest heavily in plants able to manufacture these new balls did so on a whim, but I'll say no more about it.

So, are there still differences in manufacture which can affect your game? The simple answer is yes. Is the texture of the ball shiny or smooth? Is the ball symmetrical? Does the ball have a consistent bounce? Is there a different density on one ball compared to another? Does one type of ball travel faster than another?

But tell me this? Apart from the brandname on the ball, would you be able to spot the difference between different balls? Top tournament directors choose balls based on the quality of the ball, regardless of all other factors, don't they? Balls. Why do you think so many major tournaments are sponsored by ball manufacturers?

And for a small table tennis club, another factor can affect the decision of which brand to use. Price. Yes, the balls are all made of plastic, but some can be more than double the price of others.

Table tennis is one of the most technical sport on the planet and, often due to its unthinkable variants, people over-think trying to out-think the sport. There's one table, one net, and one ball. Don't over-complicate things. Just face your opponent, fight with all your might, and have fun.

TABLE TENNIS INJURIES

As explained before, my event the other week was not caused by table tennis, but accidents can happen. We all know that. In every facet of life, there is the chance of an accident. I've heard people say that some accidents are unavoidable. If that was the case, these events would better be called "On Purposes". You can't predict when an accident is going to happen, but you should always try to minimize the risks which can lead to them. In a way, you've already done this by choosing to play table tennis. Let me explain.

The **Australian Bureau of Statistics** publishes information on the sports injuries which require a hospital emergency department visit. For once, I am pleased to say that table tennis was way down the list. And where I say way down, I mean way, way down the list.

For the 12 month period of the report, **Motor Sports** has an injury rate of **31,059** per 100,000. That's right. For every 100,000 participants, over 31,000 can expect to end up in an emergency department within a 12 month period. That's 1 in 3 participants making their way to hospital every year (presumably not in the vehicle the accident happened in).

The second most dangerous sport on the Bureau of Statistics list was **Rugby (Union and League)** which has an injury rate of **11,122** per 100,000 participants. **Roller Sports** has **7,633**, **Weightlifting (7,098)**, **Australian Rules Football (5,576)**, **Equestrian (5,241)**, **Hockey (4,034)**, **Soccer (1,882)**, **Basketball (1,564)**, **Snow Sports (1,490)**, **Water Skiing (1,370)**, **Surf Sports (1,254)**, **Netball (1,249)**, **Cricket (1,237)**, **Dancing (1,094)**, and **Fishing (1,077)**.

And remember I said that table tennis was way down the list? According to the published figures, there are a total of **6** injuries requiring an emergency department visit for each 100,000 table tennis participants. Six. That's all. And when you consider that the number of registered players in Australia is only around 10,000, you can see that table tennis is a pretty safe sport. In fact, you have **182** times the chance of injury when dancing.

That's not to say that you can't get injured playing table tennis, just that you are far less likely to need a hospital visit. And there are steps you should take to try to reduce your chances of injury even further.

I rarely see players doing any sort of warm-up or stretching exercises. Making sure that your muscles are loose before taking to the court is simple and takes very little time. Repetitive strain on tendons and ligaments may not show up immediately, but it can build over time and eventually take its toll.

Making sure you have the correct stance at the table, and that you are "moving" to your shots rather than just stretching for them will go a long way to reducing the risk of ankle, knee, lower back and shoulder problems. Maybe you should consider seeking advice from a coach if you're not sure how to stand and move properly.

Now, I'm no more a doctor than the bloke at the end of my street is a "pharmacist", but simple precautions can make an incredibly safe sport even safer.

If you get injured when playing, MTTA have first-aid officers who will assess and assist. The list of these people will be posted on the notice-board so they can be easily recognized. If you have a current first-aid qualification, and are willing to assist in the unlikely event of an accident, please notify one of the crew at the front desk to have your details added.

AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT

Melton Table Tennis have been lucky enough to gain a grant to have a defibrillator on site at the club. A group of members will be trained in its use and will be able to assist if and when required. Yes, I know it's a little bit late, but better late than never.

This defibrillator is for emergency medical use only. For other matters of the heart, may I suggest chocolates and roses.

MARCH TOURNAMENTS

It's a big long weekend of table tennis coming up in March. **Saturday the 9th** sees the **Croydon Masters Veterans Open** being run at the Kilsyth Leisure Centre. On **Sunday the 10th**, the same venue will host the **Croydon Masters Junior Open**, followed on the **Monday** public holiday by the **Croydon Masters Senior Open**.

Mornington will host the **Mornington Junior Open** on **Saturday the 23rd**, followed by the **Mornington Senior Open** on **Sunday the 24th**.

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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