



Dear table tennis friends,

Ontario Championship 2009 is over! On Saturday all day long and Sunday till 3 o'clock on eight tables in Canadian Chinese Table Tennis Association Club we witnessed joy, sadness, anger, pain, courage, happiness...74 players in 12 categories, many games, many memorable ones, many stories to be told and remembered. The real table tennis passion.

Here, I would like to share with you some of my views of the tournament.

Real heroes - Umpires and Referees

While deciding to organize the tournament, my only real concern was umpires. Getting just a few e-mails with umpires and volunteers offering help, my thinking were – If only we can get umpires for quarters, semis and finals. How wrong I was.

Saturday morning came, and one by one, umpires got into the gym, asked for their score sheets and stayed all day long. With tight and ambitious schedule some of them even refused to take lunch break. I didn't hear a single complaint, no whining, just grabbing a next assignment and heading to a table.

So my dear colleagues, coaches and players, next time we (and this we includes me) complain about their decisions, wrong or good ones, yellow cards or occasional lectures we get from them, don't forget – tournaments and all joy, sadness, anger, pain, courage, happiness that come along would not be possible



without these true table tennis soldiers.

Referee Norman Belanger and his deputy William Truong, dedicatedly and very professionally commanded a very fine squad of umpires.

This time I would like to thank each of them (and I do hope that I didn't forget someone here):

Umpire	Umpire status	Sat	Sun
1 - Agostino Campos	National Umpire Trainee	X	-
2 - Albert Chan	Club Umpire Trainee	X	X
3 - Ambrose Cheng	Provincial Umpire Trainee	X	X
4 - Frankie Chen	Provincial Umpire Trainee	X	X
5 - Henry Chance	Provincial Umpire Trainee	X	X
6 - Jacky Bispham	(unknown)	X	X
7 - Raymond Leung	National Umpire Trainee	X	X
8 - Jacklin Bispham	(unknown)	X	X
9 - Real Poudrier	National Umpire (or higher)	X	X
10 - Bou Ponn	(unknown)	-	2 match
11 - Xinde Xia	(unknown)	-	1 match
12 - Bu Chan	(unknown)	-	1 match
13 - Wendy Chen	(unknown)	1 match	-

Friends from Quebec

Norman and Real, our friends from Quebec, who came to help us organizing the tournament traveled more than six hours to join us, visiting Toronto for the first time ever. We gained good expertise from them and Toronto offered all of its hospitality (including the closed Don Valley Parkway). The side benefit to that closure was a free round of long downtown sightseeing. Pity they could not fully enjoy it, as they were way too busy trying to find the right way from downtown to Markham (that task, as most of us are painfully aware of, can be a daunting one even for far more experienced Toronto residents).



Norm and Real, for all of us it was pleasure working with you and we are looking forward to seeing you again.

LU Yen - Chun (Scott)

Lu was relatively unknown among Ontario table tennis community. Winner in Open and Under 18. After this tournament, the 17-years old boy made sure all of us and especially competition should first look for his name at draws. His appearance reveals his seriousness, but it was really hard to anticipate the fighting spirit and dedication he had in every single game. On his champion's road he was challenged twice. First against 14-years old James "Jimmy" Pinteá when he won 14-12 in 7th. Second time in final against the first seed Simon Wei. The final was one to be remembered. In first set, Simon using his pips efficiently destroyed him 11-1. Many players his age would be satisfied with already secured, very good 2nd place. Lu had other plans and got to the lead of 3-1. Then drama started. Simon equalized with Lu getting tired with a lot of leg muscle problems. In the 7th it looked that he could not continue. Suddenly, even getting to pick up balls between rallies became a challenging task. However, Lu decided to sell his skin as high as possible. Simon was puzzled, he preferred normal game, not limping opponent in pain and his good game in previous three sets was lost. With both players approaching end of the decisive 7th sets it was clear that psychological advantage was on the side of younger opponent. He kept his ground and got his first championship title. The second one, he got on Sunday. First he was superior in "death" group beating again Jimmy and Ben Bispham. Ben found his game and his way to final on Sunday (after a weak performance on Saturday) where he had to admit for the second time that Lu was better.

Way to go Lu!

Stephanie YUEN

Stephanie is not mentioned here because she won championship. We did expect that. She has just secured her spot in National Team for Commonwealth Championship in May in Scotland. Instead of enjoying the glory (her first time appearance for the Senior Team), she decided to fight her virus infection, and sat on an early bus on Saturday morning Ottawa – Toronto. Her performance was not memorable but the persistent girl understood the importance of showing at Ontario Closed. In the last couple of years, this quite and modest girl, master of pips, found the way to NT spot where her sister Sara is already long time established.

Good luck in Glasgow!

LUO Anqi

Luo and her family are already true Canadians. In just a couple of year they were in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Saskatoon and back to Toronto. How lucky Ontario is that they settle here. This 12 years old girl is champion in Under 18, Under 15, Under 13 and 3rd in Open Women. Can you ask for more? Sure, and I will. There is National in July and hopefully a lot of international tournaments in future. Her style is surprisingly uncompromised and brisk game full of daring shots. Now, some of them don't land where she wants, but I can assure you that soon they will.



James “Jimmy” PINTEA

To argue with World Champion is a daring task. To argue with Geng Li-Juan is even harder. Seeing Geng and Horatio, both famous international players in 80s and 90s, Jimmy’s parents, entering a gym on Saturday, I predicted a couple of titles. They talked back, wanted to be more modest, aware that Jimmy was just a year ago 800 points player. But left-handed Jimmy has a soft touch, excellent anticipation and very, very spiny serve and forehand. More than enough for U15 title

and nice performance in Open Men where he as the third ranked player won the group. One more thing, Jimmy was the first into the gym and seriously taking care of preparation for the game.

Duels Filip ILIJEVSKI - Moxi GUO; Max XIA – Klement YEUNG

Looking at boys younger categories, duels between Filip and Moxi were something to look forward in future. First match U11 Boys final was won by Filip. Moxi won the other one, match for 3rd place U13. Both games were full of high emotions. Knowing them, their committed parents and how much they love the game this rivalry should bring additional qualities to both players with each coming match.

On the other side, Max got his U13 title unchallenged. Klement Yeung, the other finalist, can bring his game to higher level but this time we got short for exited final. In U15 these two players were in a same group and that was 3/2 game that went to Max. They dominated their age category and at Nationals they will be one of the contenders.



Under 11 Girls

After our first knock-out finals and the award ceremony, a group of U11 girls came around the control desk table asking for pens. One of their first tournaments, medals, excitements is ending with exchange of e-mail and phones. It will lead to some training together or car share ride to next tournament, or it is only a girl thing – sleep over, party, get together. Jia Bao, Justina, Sheree, Tammy, Amy and Justina demonstrated on spot how to build a team spirit. That are a group any coach would like to have at major tournament, and Nationals are just two and half month away.

OTTA – real gainer

Gym packed with players, officials, coaches, parents and tt friends for two days; excellent response from umpires; Table Tennis Canada Executive Director Tony Kiesenhofer playing and presenting medals, Colin, Alain, Mark, David and others that competed in O40 and O50 and demonstrated values of sportsmanship; fine standard reached in many games; the winners mentioned above plus the others: Shannon (twice finalist), Bens (Li and Bispham), Michael and many more that played fine but were just a step or two away from the podium...

Lots of reasons for Larry Laughlen, OTTA President and the other Board members to smile when they were driving back on Sunday afternoon.

Dejan Papic