

# **ENGLISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION LTD**



## **CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER No. 1**

**SEPTEMBER 2003**

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## **CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER NO 1**

Dear Member

It is my intention to try and keep the membership updated on a quarterly basis by way of a newsletter. It will also be posted on the new website. The circulation list has been taken from the various ETTA databases and a consolidated list obtained.

### **Management Committee**

At the recent National Council meeting my nominations for each Departmental Vice Chairman were approved and they are.

Administration.	John Dignum.
Public Relations.	Jim Beckley.
Competitions.	Peter Bradley.
Development.	Phil Goulding
Marketing.	Sandra Deaton.
Teaching and Training.	Gail McCulloch.
Selection.	Mike Johns.
Without Portfolio.	Di Jermyn.

The Management team is completed by Martin Clark (Treasurer) and myself (Chairman). The President, Johnny Leach, and the Chief Executive Richard Yule, are normally invited to attend meetings.

### **World Class Performance (WCP)**

#### **Current Funding**

I have been asked why the ETTA have spent so much money on so few. Historically the strategy has been to provide a central residential facility to train our top juniors and support our senior programme at the same place.

Our funding numbers were given to the National Council in April. They are £160,000 for Junior Elite (only for 6 nominated players) from 1<sup>st</sup> August for 12 months and £55,000 for our senior players up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

I questioned why the funding was for these 6 young people only and was advised that this was the plan generated in December last year and accepted by Sport England and I have been given confirmation from them that this is the criteria set by them for this £160,000. However it is our decision how we spend the money in the training of these 6 players.

This is a dramatic reduction from the £1.3 million received during the previous 2-year period. However, I wish to point out that the plan, submitted by the ETTA to Sport England in December, was for a total of £320,000 made up of £180,000 to cover our juniors and

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£110,000 for our Commonwealth Games 2006 build up training. The balance of funding coming from a direct ETTA contribution.

### **Future Funding**

Any further funding for this area is in serious jeopardy in the future, as we are not meeting the present Sport England criteria. We do expect funding, yet to be agreed, for the 18 months prior to the next Commonwealth Games in 2006, to train our players. This was not accepted as part of the plan made in December 2002.

Many meetings have taken place regarding this matter to find a solution but for many reasons not only financially but meeting government child care requirements the Academy will not continue, but we will be able to continue for the next 12 months in the training of our nominated players. Steen Hansen who is responsible for WCP, in conjunction with the new officers has created a programme to fulfil the needs of these juniors which meets the financial guidelines we have set within the requirements stipulated by Sport England. In addition more stringent financial controls will be established to ensure that both the ETTA and Sport England get value for money.

This is clearly not the programme needed to expand our potential young player base but the best that could be achieved within the time frame set and the funding available.

### **Future Strategy**

It will be the responsibility of the WCP group in conjunction with the Selection Department to increase the standard and expand the opportunities for young players who have the potential to become England Squad players in the future.

This will be achieved via self financing Performance Centres being set up around the country at clubs which can accommodate training two evenings a week. We expect to have between 6 to 8 of these established this season, and I hope the figure will grow to over 30 during the coming years as part of our longer-term development plans. Further details about this will be circulated in the coming months.

Steen Hansen has agreed to set up a programme of selection criteria during the next two months for players who have the potential to be selected to represent England. We do understand the need for our top seniors to earn a living out of the sport. However, it is also very important that our players are seen at Grand Prix events and take part in a newly proposed top 12 competition. They will also need to meet the training programme instigated by the WCP.

### **Finance and 2003/2004 Budgets**

I wish to make it quite clear why the 2002/03 accounts show a surplus of £61,000 following approval by the AGM. Within this substantial improvement from last year's large deficit are three exceptional items. These impact this surplus and include under spending on the Regional Development Officers (RDO) programme, an add back due to dilapidation rules changes and a refund from Sport England. The total impact of these was £72,000. The membership was assured at the AGM that there would be no claw back of the under-spend on the RDO programme.

The 2003/4 budgets, which have been generated by the previous administration with some input from us, show a budgeted surplus for the year of £4,480. Martin will be reporting regularly to the Management and National Council as the year progresses and revising forecasts accordingly.

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It has been necessary to make two positions redundant at head office but full finance will be available for all RDO's and we expect to have the full compliment on board by end of September, subject to suitable candidates coming forward.

### **Development**

#### **Funding**

We received our £435,000 sport development funding in April, which came from plans established and presented for 1998-2002. This funding has been given to us for the last time prior to us presenting a new Development Plan for 2004-2008. This must be submitted before the end of the year. This new plan will be prepared to encompass all areas of our sport in England. Any future support and funding is dependant upon what happens within Sport England, who are currently going through a massive re-organisation process including 50% staff cuts.

#### **Present Status**

We are in a difficult position as, despite £5M in funding and grants received over the last 5 years our medal prospects continue to be limited. The sport has not shown the anticipated growth in membership and the increase in our own income generation has not grown to the levels expected of us following an audit by Sport England.

Despite this doom and gloom we have many factors in our favour. Our sport is played worldwide with many millions of registered players, making competition and achieving medals at World and Olympic levels, more difficult than the vast majority of other sports. We have a sport, which covers an age range of 6 to 100. It encompasses our multicultural society. Many people with disabilities can and do play Table Tennis. We are involved with programmes in deprived areas of England. Men/women and boys/girls of all abilities shape or size can participate. We meet the governments "social inclusion" criteria and the availability of playing facilities in schools, colleges and sports centres is second to none. We have a selling job on our hands to ensure that we become one of the selected sports within this newly established programme.

### **Rating and Ranking List**

We shall establish a modified ranking system from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, subject to the trial procedure being successful and further discussions on its operation.

The new ranking system will not include win and loss points being transferred across age categories and will only apply to the type of event (juniors, seniors or veterans) played in. Bonus points will be given to players who progress to the quarterfinal stage and beyond, in all events, and these will be relative to the status of the event and the number of participants.

Players who fail to participate during 5 rating periods will be removed. Players who play abroad will only have their wins and losses used in the rating list if they play someone who has an established World or European position to compare them with. The procedure of giving points to players based upon estimated dummy ratings will be discontinued.

Much discussion took place regarding the removal of all losses but it was agreed to try the above-mentioned system with half losses for the first year and, if necessary, reviewed again later.

### **Table Tennis News**

The new departmental head, whose responsibilities include TTN, agrees that we must ensure the magazine is sent out on time, that the content and articles improve and become more useful and interesting for the membership. A new and improved layout of the magazine will be formulated and cost reductions must also take place. All of these will take a little time but they must be in place during the next few months. It is anticipated that the first issue will not come out until 1<sup>st</sup> October but the full 8 issues will be included for next season. It is part of our programme to give free issues for leagues and counties once the magazine meets the requirements of the Management team. We intend to generate an improved subscription drive programme.

### **Website**

The new website is still being established and once online will be updated on a regular basis. An article will appear in TTN and on the website about the ideas and improvements planned during the coming months. It will include;

1. Each Department will have a section available to it, so members can be updated.
2. Contact details will be on the site to assist existing and potential new players.
3. More documents will be added so members can download the information they require.
4. Results of events will be up to date.
5. Articles of interest will be included.
6. Different types of procedures will be established for members to get rating list information.
7. I shall have a section called Chairman's Forum, which will include a Question and Answer facility.

### **Communications**

Hopefully the improvements in TTN and the Website take us some of the way towards improving communications. The website will have regular reports from departmental heads and myself on what is happening and future plans. It would be great if all members had an email address so that quick and up to date information could be established. I believe that within the 7000 teams registered in our league structure one of that team's members will have an email address. We are attempting to gather as many names as possible for our email data base and suggest that if you are on email please send your details to the ETTA office for inclusion. This method of communication will be more effective and over the longer term will reduce our overheads.

Until we consolidate all our separate databases some duplication will occur and I want this resolved during the coming months.

### **Teaching and Training**

We have received £90,000 over 2 years for the appointment of a Volunteers Manager and more details about this role will be circulated later.

The establishment of a new programme for this department will appear on the website in the coming months, which will encompass changes in coaching criteria, a new Skills Award programme and strategies to help the membership in this very important area.

There will be a much closer relationship between the Selection, Development and Teaching & Training Departments of the ETTA.

## **Individual Membership**

### **The Plan**

We will be setting up a small working party under a Departmental Head to push this forward and try to get it in place for the start of the 2004/5 season. We have a great deal of work to do regarding the Rules of the Association, which will need approval at an AGM prior to implementation, which may impact the time scales. The membership structure has been under review for about 4 years, and this effort will be used in conjunction with the new management teams views, but it is now very important that we get it in place as soon as practical.

### **Current Status**

Our funding partners have clearly stated, some time ago, that we must increase our contribution towards the income of the ETTA by every means possible, to ensure that their funding contribution is sustainable.

We cannot have a system, which does not encompass all players in the payment of affiliation fees. Many players pay fees to more than one league who then pass it on to the ETTA. Additional fees are paid by the same players for a licence with some people just paying a licence fee and making no other contribution. This results in the ETTA being unable to know how many affiliated players it has and how this changes season by season. Our total revenue from the membership does not even cover our basic costs of running the ETTA's day-to-day operation.

### **A Way Forward**

It will be necessary that the membership contribute more income to the ETTA and get value for money. At present the fee for affiliation is £3.78 per member, albeit that many members pay additional contributions for playing more, which is only right and proper.

The new working party will look towards having a membership structure, which will be on three or four levels. Included with the annual fee will be various benefits dependent upon the level players join. These will range from a membership card for all and a benefits book to include discounts with various organisations, vouchers, bi-annual newsletter and a Christmas draw with substantial prizes. Additional items will be added to the package as the level and numbers increase.

It will be the Management's responsibility to ensure that members receive and believe that they are getting something back from the money they contribute to the ETTA and that all costs are kept under control, so we have funds available to expand and promote the sport at all levels, increase our sponsorship income and improve our media exposure.

I am sure that some members will be unhappy about any increase in affiliation fees, please bear in mind when you pay your fees to the local league that it also includes the cost, which the league applies to cover both the running of the league and county.

On my travels during the campaign the question raised regularly was "what does the ETTA do for me". The ETTA receives a £3.78 annual affiliation fee from members. The problem faced is how much we can do at £3.78 per head. A new sheet of rubber for a bat costs up to £30 and a new ball £0.60. The Affiliation Fee does not cover the cost of having a RDO to try and help you in your area to increase membership and support new projects to overcome the increasing venue problem many areas have.

I am and have been an average league player for over 30 years and consider your problems are also mine. Trust and support us during the "time for change". The difference will be noticed and felt very soon.

### **11 up scoring system**

This change has caused some problems within the membership and I have worked tirelessly discussing with leagues, clubs and players about how this change in the Laws of Table Tennis in England will impact them.

I have spent more hours than I wish to remember both at home and on the road going over numerous questions raised on this issue in an attempt to ensure that as many leagues and hence players affiliate to the ETTA and adhere to the new laws.

I cannot say that I have achieved a 100% success rate and it will be interesting to see what impact this change has made when all the affiliation fees are in. The ETTA Treasurer will closely monitor this situation.

### **Summary**

With the season about to start I hope and request that you take on board these changes within your league so we can work together for our great sport.

It should be remembered that despite winning the election in early April, the officers only took up their posts at the end of June and the New Management were not on board until the end of July.

We have a long road ahead together and you can be assured that we will work with you towards the goal of the expansion of Table Tennis in England and a better future for our sport as a whole.

I am enclosing with this newsletter a number of documents, which may be of interest to you.

- 1 A subscription form for TTN, which is the member's official magazine of Table Tennis in England. It costs £21 per season for eight issues.
2. A form to purchase the ETTA events Diary and order form for ETTA merchandise.
3. Application form for a MBNA credit card, who give the ETTA a commission.

If you are not aware, application forms are available from the ETTA office for you to get a players licence. You can also apply for an application form to get regular copies of the Ratings list Document.

I hope this gives you a brief insight into current activities and regular updates will continue. I am available for you to air your views, discuss ideas and help whenever necessary.

Kind regards

Alex Murdoch  
ETTA Chairman

concluded