

Butterfly® NEWS

2008 11

Europaen Championships St. Petersburg (Russia)

Timo Boll shines with historical triumph in the Championships



Timo Boll sets a monument for eternity in the magnificent imperial city of St. Petersburg. The 27-year old German is the first player ever to defend every title (singles, doubles, teams) of the European Championships in Belgrade last year since 1948. But that is not all: Along with the Swede Mikael Appelgren and his final opponent Vladimir Samsonov (Belarus) they each own three singles championship titles. If he wins another

European Championship in Stuttgart next year, the two time World Cup champion could once again write table tennis history. **More about on the next Page!**

Butterfly players account for 16 medals



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In this issue:

Review EM St. Petersburg (Russia)	02
EM/WRL (10/08)	04
EM-Interview Timo Boll	05
Tips and Tricks Werner Schlager: The double	06
Butterfly-Inside Shunsaku Yamada - Butterfly	09
Interview Richard Prause, Germany	10
Products of the month Global Kollektion	12
Technique Tips The forhand topspin	13
Butterfly-Inside Butterfly-Academy	17

European Championships in St. Petersburg

Timo Boll shines with historical triumph in the Championships

The historical best note of 2008 goes along with a record setting conclusion of a different kind. Players representing Butterfly scored their spots on the podium 16 times in six competitions. Butterfly earned five gold, three silver and eight bronze medals at the European Championships in St. Petersburg. Above all, the prestigious men's singles competition was dominated by Tamasu players, winning all three podium positions. The Austrians, Robert Gardos and Werner Schlager, both came third after Timo Boll. After losing all sets to Boll, Schlager was without a chance in the semi-finals.

Having dominated his previous singles matches Schlager's luck vanished not only when he had to play against a superb Boll but also had to suffer from a torn muscle in his shoulder. This resulted in pain during forehand topspins. Schlager: „That was a bit of a handicap, sure, but it's not an excuse. Because Timo played an excellent game today.“ The German player commented on his appearance in the semi-finals: „It came close to being a perfect table tennis match. I can be very, very satisfied.“ Boll, although the defending champion, did not count as one of the top favorites prior to the semi-final match against Schlager. The same applied to the final match against Samsonov. The World Cup finalist of Liège clearly lost to both players during team semi-finals and the finals, respectively. Boll: „Yet, I have shown improvement during the course of the tournament. During the team event I had problems in returning the ball. As the matches went on, I finally got the hang of it.“

Each day Boll seemed more and more confident as the matches proceeded. Among other things he traces this back to his new material: „Despite the ban of speed gluing introduced after the Olympic Games, I'm handling the material change really well. My play hasn't lost any speed, and my strokes are even more accurate.“ Prior to Schlager and Samsonov Danish Butterfly player Michael Maze also felt its effects in the



19. November - 23. November 2008

Pro Tour: ERKE German Open, Berlin

26. November - 30. November 2008

Pro Tour: Polish Open, Warschau

11. December - 14. December 2008

Pro Tour: Volkswagen Grand Final, Macao

09. January - 11. January 2009

Tournament of Champions, Changcha (China)

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03 Preview European Championships



quarter-finals. After winning the first two sets the World Cup's third placed did not stand a chance against a confident and dominating German. Boll: „I know him well, that's why I had to stay calm trailing 0:2. Michael's „run“ had to end eventually.“

One lucky loser was Trinko Keen (the Netherlands). Together with Schlager, the 37-year old lost in the doubles finals after leading 6:3 to Timo Boll and his colleague Christian Süß at the last set. However, for the European

Championships' third placed in 1998 winning the silver medal sweetened his previously announced retirement from the international table tennis scenes. Keen: „To get into the European Championships finals in my last international tournament is a great success. It doesn't matter whether the noble metal shines silver or gold.“ Another Butterfly player took an active part in Boll's third team title. Bastian Steger, currently residing in Frickenhausen, with huge wins in the last two elimination rounds plus the finals enabled the defending of the German title. Later in the singles competition during the last round of 16 he proved his strength. After fighting hard he lost to Samsonov 3:4 in a close match, who then later proceeded to the finals.

Krisztina Toth won three medals in the women's competitions, repeating last year's success in Belgrade. This time, however, the arrangement was different because there were no mixed competitions. Like last year the Hungarian collected gold, silver and bronze medals, but they failed to defend the Hungarian team title. They were defeated by the Netherlands. Toth, who won bronze in the singles competition, was successful along with Georgina Pota at the women's doubles. In the doubles competition, all three spots on the podium were taken by Butterfly players. Nikoletta Stefanova and Wenling Tan-Monfardini (both Italy) shared the silver medal. Veronika Pavlovich (Belarus) and Oksana Fadeeva (Russia), as well as Paralympics winner Natalia Partyka and Xu Jie (both Poland) made their appearances in the semi-finals for the first time.

The conclusion of the European Championships reveals mixed feelings. Athletes showed signs of fatigue after a long Olympic season. Yet, the overall playing level was indeed attractive in the men's competition. Particularly Timo Boll and Werner Schlager, who both played with skill and fun, left their marks. It is interesting to note that Portugal and France, both nations featuring young players, provided excellent results to some extent. The women's competitions, on the other hand, showed once again weaknesses to be able to compete against Asian standards. Ruta Paskauskiene, three times mixed European champion from Lithuania, won the title playing a solid game. She never came close to one of the podium spots in the singles competition before. Counting as one of the senior players at 31 years, the title win may surprise Asian players but it will certainly not alarm them.

The lack of a proper control unit to maintain the speed glue ban is one of the main areas of concern that will haunt the 2008 European Championships in St. Petersburg. „Clean“ athletes had to suffer from those who still manipulated their rubbers. Empty stands and the presentation far below the international top level were further points of criticism. The ETTU has to act on it, otherwise it will lose the credibility of the sport to both the media and spectators. Probably the most curious incident of the tournament, which, by the way, did not seem to be planned in great detail, happened during its final minutes. Krisztina Toth and Georgina Pota were the ones to suffer. Instead of their Hungarian national anthem, a wrong one was played two times. Those responsible led them off the podium, just to play the correct national anthem almost an hour later. Krisztina Toth could only shake her head: „This does not happen in a sport like soccer. We ourselves destroy our sport like this.“



The results

Men-Single

Gold: Timo Boll GER

Silver: Vladimir Samsonov BLR

Bronze: Werner Schlager AUT

Bronze: Robert Gardos AUT

Women-Single

Gold: Ruta Paskauskiene LTU

Silver: Liu Jia AUT

Bronze: Krisztina Toth HUN

Bronze: Wenling Tan-Monfardini ITA

Men-Double

Gold: Timo Boll GER/Christian Süß GER

Silver: Werner Schlager AUT/Trinko Keen NED

Bronze: Marcos Freitas/Tiago Apolonia POR

Bronze: Jon Persson/Robert Svensson SWE

Women-Double

Gold: Krisztina Toth HUN/Georgina Pota HUN

Silver: Nikoleta Stefanova ITA/Wenling Tan-Monfardini ITA

Bronze: Veronika Pavlovich BLR/Oksana Fadeeva RUS

Bronze: Natalia Partyka POL/Xu Jie POL

Men-Team

Gold: Germany (with Timo Boll, Bastian Steger)

Silver: Whiterussia

Bronze: Austria (with Werner Schlager, Robert Gardos)

Bronze: Belgium

Women-Team

Gold: Netherland (with Linda Creemers, Carla Nouwen)

Silver: Hungary (with Krisztina Toth)

Bronze: Croatia (with Tamara Boros, Sandra Paovic, Andrea Bakula)

Bronze: Rumania (with Daniela Dodean)

ITTF World Ranking, Mens (10/2008)



1	WANG Hao CHN	16	CHEUNG Yuk HKG
2	MA Long CHN	17	SCHLAGER Werner AUT
3	MA Lin CHN	18	GAO Ning SIN
4	WANG Liqin CHN	19	KAN Yo JPN
5	SAMSONOV Vladimir BLR	20	PERSSON Jörgen, SWE
6	BOLL Timo GER	21	MAZE Michael DEN
7	Chen Qi CHN	22	KO Lai Chak, HKG
8	RYU Seung Min KOR	23	MITZUTANI Jun JPN
9	JOO Se Hyuk KOR	24	CRISAN Adrian ROU
10	HAO Shuai CHN	25	PRIMORAC Zoran, HRV
11	LI Ching HKG	26	CHEN Weixing, AUT
12	OH Sang Eun KOR	27	HOU Yingchao CHN
13	OVTCHAROV Dimitrij GER	28	YANG Zi, SIN
14	KREANGA Kalinikos GRE	29	YOON Jae Young KOR
15	CHUAN Chih-Yuan TPE	30	CHIANG Peng-Lung TPE

ITTF World Ranking, Women (10/2008)



1	ZHANG Yining CHN	16	Li Jiao NED
2	LI Xiaoxia CHN	17	FAN Ying CHN
3	GUO Yue CHN	18	WANG Chen USA
4	WANG Nan CHN	19	NIU Jianfeng CHN
5	GUO Yan CHN	20	DANG Ye Seo KOR
6	Li Jia Wei SIN	21	LIU Shiwen CHN
7	FENG Tianwei SIN	22	HIRANO Sayaka JPN
8	WANG Yue Gu SIN	23	PARK Mi Young KOR
9	TIE Yana HKG	24	LIU Jia AUT
10	JIANG Huajun HKG	25	SUN Bei Bei SIN
11	KIM Kyung Ah KOR	26	FUKUOKA Haruna JPN
12	GAO Jun USA	27	WU Jiaduo GER
13	FUKUHARA Ai JAP	28	Yao Yan, CHN
14	CAO Chen CHN	29	DIN G Ning CHN
15	LIN Ling HKG	30	SHEN Yanfei, ESP

(Butterfly-players are marked!)

Timo Boll: Defending three titles with new rubbers and a new blade



Congratulations on three successfully defended titles in St. Petersburg. A historical triumph no other player has accomplished before. Did you have time to celebrate, or were you swamped after your return as the old and new European champion?

Boll: There was only short time to celebrate. In St. Petersburg, the finals took place in the evening.

Afterwards, I had two glasses of beer and a smoked rib. Two hours later I was on my way to the airport. There was not much time to celebrate, instead a lot of stress. When I got back home there were a lot of requests. One of them was from Stefan Raab's TV show. But I will find some time for myself too - hopefully!

Remarkably you were able to beat Werner Schlager and Vladimir Samsonov quite clearly. You defeated both of your Butterfly colleagues in the semi-finals and the finals, respectively, although they had won against you in the team competition just as easily. What had changed during the course of five days, until you met again for the second time - the strategy or your daily condition?

Boll: Both. During the tournament I evolved a better feel for my return stroke. Each of them has extremely good serves, and at this level returning a serve is of the utmost importance, if not match deciding. Overall I have increased my efficiency during the course of the whole tournament.

Just like in your run for the finals at the World Cup in Liège, including the victorious match against Ma Long, it seemed that your play in St. Petersburg was even more controlled than it had been before. Was it coincidence, or were those the positive effects of your material change after the ban of speed gluing?

Boll: Indeed, those are the effects of changing the material. Since the Olympic Games I have worked on it. My passive play benefits from the slightly slower rubbers. In addition to that I'm lucky to have an excellent and reliable outfitter in Butterfly who has been steadily supplying me with outstanding material.

What kind of material have you been playing since the speed glue ban?

Boll: I use Tenergy 05 with 2.1 mm sponge. My blade is from the new Timo Boll Blade Series ALC, available in stores in December. ALC stands for Arylate-Carbon. Overall, the blade possesses a similar character like Timo Boll Spirit, which I played before. As you can see, I'm handling my material really well.

The European Championships gave the impression that a large part of the athletes unfortunately did not stick to the new rules, using undetectable tuners and boosters during the racket test. What do you think of this trend which obviously disregards fairness and equal conditions?

Boll: In my opinion, you have to have a proper control mechanism before establishing these kinds of rules. The world organisation ITTF has shot itself in the foot. It provides a disadvantage for every athlete that abides by the new rules. I, on the other hand, am very fortunate to have a supplier with excellent material. I'm very happy with my new rubbers. I would never use tuners or boosters. That would not be fair. But I hope that soon they will find ways to detect them. I suggest keeping the rubbers after the matches and controlling them in a lab. If they test positively and prove the use of suspicious treatment, there should be hard penalties for those players.

Can you give the German fans a hint as to when and where we will see the new and old European champion Timo Boll in Germany next?

Boll: As usual I will appear in the German Table Tennis League, as well as the Champions League with Borussia Düsseldorf, of course. Also, I will play in the German Open in Berlin from November 19th to November 23rd.

World Champion Werner Schlager Part 20: The double

Previous articles: push, counter hit, forehand – topspin, backhand topspin, flip, smash, balloon defence, backspin defence, block, service return, technical training, playing systems, endurance 1, endurance 2, strength, power, coordination

In 2003 Werner Schlager became sensationally World Champion in the Men Singles in Paris and was the number 1 in June on the World Ranking List. Momentarily he is ranked number 17. In October he won a bronze medal in the singles and a Silver medal in the doubles with the Dutch Trinko Keen. The 35 year old Austrian lives and lived table tennis like nobody else. Since years he trusts Butterfly Material and is an excellent counsellor of the company. In his book: „Matchball – Dreams and Triumphs“, which was published in 2006, he describes his career, his successes and disappointments, his opinions about table tennis and his very personal quite philosophical thoughts about life. A very good book, not only for table tennis players. In the new Butterfly series „Tips & Tricks from the World champion“ he answers many questions concerning all areas of competition and training. The Butterfly team and Werner Schlager wish you, dear reader, good entertainment and joy.



Doubles, some love it others can do without it. What do you think about the doubles?

I really enjoy playing doubles. For me it is a challenge to play with somebody else and find a winning strategy together.

Didn't your personal rise in professional table tennis begin with the doubles? You and your former Austrian doubles partner Karl Jindrak, who is now one of the ITTF Tournament directors, were among the most successful doubles in the PRO TOUR and didn't you become European Champion in 2005? Did the successes in the doubles encourage you for the singles?

In the beginning, yes. I had my first international success already as a cadet player. Later I could follow my doubles successes in the singles and look at the doubles now as an interesting change which I enjoy playing.

What was so special about your combination? From the outside Karl didn't look particularly fit during the last years.

We have been partners for a long time so we knew our strength and weaknesses very well. Karl's strengths were his brilliant serves and his dangerous forehand. His weakness was in the physical areas which wasn't so noticeable in the doubles.

Now in St. Petersburg you helped the Dutch player Trinko Keen to the nicest farewell present because the 38-year-old is now leaving the international stage. How did you manage to get to the finals?

If I am honest I didn't have great expectations. But already in the first game everything went surprisingly well. Surprising because we played several years ago together in the Pro Tour and got to the semi-finals but we didn't work well together. This time it was different. We played better together from game to game and got to the final. An interesting and happy experience.

Why couldn't you win after a well deserved lead of 3:1 in the final against Boll/Suess and lost 4:3 in the end?

Boll/Suess was the only doubles which could play at the same level as us. In the sixth set they had the luck on their side with three lucky balls in a row. In the deciding seventh set Suess played from 3:6 onwards without a mistake.

What is special about a good doubles player in general?

A good doubles player must agree about the tactics with his partner.

Why is the combination of a left handed and right handed player the best combination in an attacking game?

The combination „left-right“ has the advantage of a good service of the left handed player plus no general „weaker side“ (the backhand). Also the paths of movement are crossing less which means the players are less often in each others way especially after the service.

When two offensive right handed players play together what must they be aware of?

They should possess a good doubles serve and the server must rotate quickly after his serve in the direction of an optimal neutral position.

When two left handed players play together what must they do?

They must take care that they don't block each others way after the serve. Again they must try that the server gets into a good starting position for his second stroke.

Occasionally you see an offensive-defensive combination. Your Austrian team colleagues Chen Weixing and Robert Gardos play together. What is important here?



The active player should be able to react very well to offensive balls, which means that he should be able to block well and counter loop well. The consistency of defensive player should be above average when attacking.

The service possibilities are reduced because of the limited placement possibilities. There are fewer aces in the doubles than in the singles. Still the service is very important for

the opening of the game. What is the difference between serving in the doubles and the singles?

Because of the reduction in placement the quality must be above average.

How many different varieties do you signal to your partner with your fingers under the table?

Six.

What are the most tactical placements which can be used in the doubles in general?

Against a left-right combination in the middle of the table, against two right handed players additionally to the according backhand side.

What kind of social behaviour is absolutely necessary for a good doubles pair?

They must be willing to compromise.

What is the worst mistake a partner can make?

Stubbornly play his singles tactics.

Are you talking to your partner during the set when things don't go well? What is important then?

If necessary you should also talk during the set about tactics and adjust the tactics accordingly.

Some experts maintain that in view of the speed of the game the doubles nowadays are more difficult to play than the singles. Others say that you can't compare this, singles and doubles are two completely different games. What do you think?

I think that the doubles are physically less demanding than the singles. Therefore the mental (tactical and emotional) demands are higher because of the compromises with your partner. Singles and doubles are different in their demands and can therefore only be compared roughly with each other.

Doubles partners who played together for many years often became good friends. What about you and Karl?

Exactly. Despite or perhaps because of our partially very different characteristics we became very good friends.

Does the coach play a different role in the singles than in the doubles?

His role is not completely different from that in the singles. But the coaching of more than one person is more complex and it is more difficult to find winning tactics.

Some consider the future of the doubles in danger in the long run. The Olympic Games were the beginning because there was no extra doubles event. In tennis it also started slowly. Today there are separate doubles tournaments with specialists whom hardly anybody knows. How do you see the future of the doubles?

I don't see this danger. There was a doubles included in the team event in Peking. The doubles will not lose its right to exist. It looks different in the mixed doubles. This event is dying already.

To play the doubles... *is always a challenge for me.*

The doubles demand... *the ability to compromise.*

The modern offensive doubles... *has many fans.*

If you want to be successful in the doubles... *you must invest many years.*

If my partner makes a foul serve at 10:10 in the seventh set... *hell is loose.*

„We are still reinforcing our research and development“

Shunsaku Yamada, 56, is the leader of the Butterfly Company since January 2006. In this interview he takes a review about his work up to now and takes a look at the future developments and targets.

Mr. Yamada you have now been President of Tamasu Butterfly for three years. Then the leading position was a new challenge for you. As we know you came from the production department of the company and were the leader of the Butterfly factory in Tokyo. What is the main difference in comparison to your former activity?

I met a lot of people all over the world and it was important for me as a president. These were valuable experiences for me.

Did you make some fundamental changes concerning the structures or procedures of the company?

Up to now we didn't make any drastic changes. The time was too short for that. But now we are facing some changes. We want to move our BTC (Butterfly Technical Centre) close to area of the factory so that the production and development can work together very closely. For that we need to build new buildings.

The momentary situation which the ITTF set in place is confusing. After banning the glue, tuners and boosters were also forbidden without being able to prove the borderlines. Butterfly seems obviously best prepared for this situation. The new rubber TENERGY 05 with its revolutionary SPRING SPONGE technology is the most popular rubber among top players at the moment. Also at the basis the demand is enormous. No other rubber seems to get close to it without glue or boosters. How long did it take to develop this new technology?

It wasn't easy to develop and produce the new sponge. That took five years. The development of the first products went relatively quickly. The main difficulty was the mass production of these SPRING SPONGE - sponge layers.

Obviously Butterfly has got a technological lead concerning clean rubbers which have similar qualities like freshly glued or boosted rubbers. What is your next step, Mr. Yamada?



Naturally I can't tell you any secrets. But we were and are convinced that the development of rubbers is closely connected to the development of new sponges. Therefore we will keep working intensively with this.

What about the technology of blades?

Naturally we are also spending a lot of time in research and development in this area. We experiment a lot with material like Carbon, Tamca Carbon 5000, Arylate, Glassfibre and Zylon in connection with different woods. Some of these High-Tech-Blades did really well on the market. We will surely come up with some new combinations.

Butterfly has got 150 staff. How many of these are only working on research and development?

Eight highly qualified people. That is not all; we are still strengthening our research department. We just bought a little highly specialized company which is going to do the basic research concerning the surface of the rubbers, the sponges and the blades. Their results are sent straight to our production development. By this we document how important research and development is for a table tennis manufacturer who claims that only the best product is good enough for the player and customer.

How do you evaluate the business development over the last couple of years?

In Japan our growth is only marginal because of the structural situation of the Japanese market. But our growth in foreign countries is above average. I am very satisfied with that.

China is surely a special market for Butterfly. How is business in TBC (Tamasu Butterfly China)?

We are satisfied here too and are growing steadily.

Mr. Yamada, thank you very much for your open words and good luck in the future.

Richard Prause, Deutschland

„We surely don't have a subscription to the European title!“



Richard Prause, coach of the German Men's National Team and Butterfly coach, won the Gold medal at the European Championships twice with his team around Timo Boll. Germany is without any doubt the strongest table tennis nation in Europe with the men. Timo Boll succeeded in the unbelievable masterpiece to win the triple again in St. Petersburg after 2007. He won Gold in the singles, the doubles and the team event. No European player managed that before. He wrote table tennis history with this. Please read how Richard Prause evaluates the German successes and how he sees the perspective for his team.

Mr. Prause, defending the title wasn't so easy. You did work hard for this, didn't you?

Obviously. Last year we were brilliant at the European Championships. We concentrated on winning the Gold with the team finally after 49 years. This year the preparation was clearly directed towards Peking. Therefore our target for the European Championships was to play as well as possible but also to fight well. That has worked perfectly. We certainly didn't play

as well as during the Olympic Games but we stuck together as a team and fought right until the end. That was the key for success and could we win those close matches against Austria and in the final White Russia only like that. In the end we deserved the title because we fought well.

What makes Germany's men so special at the moment in Europe, the greater team spirit or the greater potential of players?

The truth is probably somewhere in the middle. During the European Championships the weight was distributed on many shoulders. We profited from the fact that we had a fresh player with Bastian Steger on the team who wasn't on the team in Peking and he wanted to show that he is valuable for the team. Our fifth player, Patrick Baum, also played on a very high level. We were fighting as a team.

When you look at World – or European Table Tennis there were always certain nations who were dominating for a longer period of time, if it were the Chinese, the Swedes or the Hungarians. Is Germany at the beginning of such a period at least in Europe?

I could only wish for something like that. But if you take a closer look at how close some of those matches were especially against Austria then we could have dropped out earlier. From the Austrian point of view a victory would also have been well deserved. That was really tight. I always look forward and if I look at the young Portuguese or French players there will also be strong opponents in the future. I hope that we will also play for the title in the years to come but we don't have a subscription to the title.

In Peking the German's won a silver medal in the team event. Where is Germany standing in your estimation in world table tennis?

If we can play at top level like in Peking we can get to the finals in the world. We hope that we can challenge the Chinese more than we did in the final in Peking. In opposite to the Chinese who only need to concentrate on three or four teams we must concentrate on many more. I greatly respect Japan, South Korea, Singapore and others. We can't only concentrate on the Chinese but must take seven or eight other nations into consideration. In between all of this lies the truth and we hope that we can be one of those teams on top level.

Let's talk about Timo Boll's successes in the singles and the doubles. In the team event he lost to Werner Schlager and Vladimir Samsonov. Then he improved dramatically in the singles and doubles event.

That is true. In both matches which he lost the team came in and helped him. In the doubles and the singles he got better from match to match. In the semi-finals against Werner and in the final against Vladi he could take revenge for the losses in the team event in an impressive manner. He showed that he learns from defeats very quickly and changed a few little points which lead to success. Physically he was also in top form because he showed his best matches at the end.

The doubles final of Timo Boll and Christian Suess against Werner Schlager and Trinko Keen – a double which played together at a tournament many years ago - looked lost when they were 3:1 down. How did the match turn round?

Werner and Trinko played on a very high level and didn't allow Timo and Christian to play any winning shots. Despite that they permanently tried to stay close and that was finally deciding from my point of view. Then they succeeded in deciding situations to play more active and more aggressive. Naturally you also need a bit of luck because they were already 3:6 down in the 7th set when Timo and Christian played a series of brilliant balls which gave them a well deserved victory in the end.

TV-Spot with Timo Boll

Do you fancy a TV-Spot with Timo Boll? No problem, just click on www.butterfly-world.com TV-Spot Timo Boll. Enjoy viewing!



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Global collection

Before the Olympic Games 2008 a new, world wide shirt and shorts series „global“ was designed. These were presented by some table tennis associations during the competitions. The result shows an attractive clothes collection which we now can bring on the market. It includes two shirts, one Lady Shirt, shorts and a skirt in different colour combinations. The striking dynamic design of the shirts is combined with the functional 100% polyester micro which is comfortable to wear and optically attractive. The men's shirts are available with two different collars, one with buttons, the other one with a straight collar (in black only). They are optimally combined with shorts in matching colours and a good fitting. The Lady Shirts are available in two colours with buttons and a waist cutting. The matching classical skirt is an ideal supplement.



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Price 16.90 Euro



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Price 24.90 Euro
Global shorts
Magenta/black 3xs - 4xl
Price 16.90 Euro



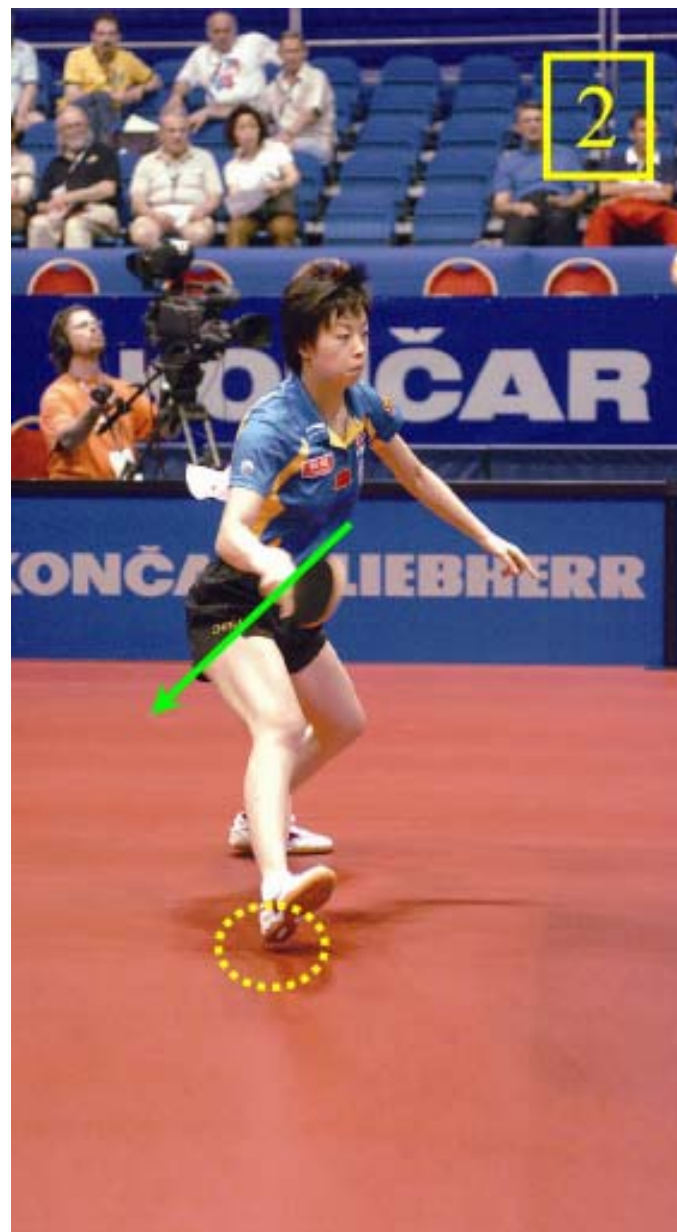
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The forehand topspin in extreme situations – part 1

In the last Butterfly News we looked at the forehand topspin with both feet parallel to the table. Table tennis has become faster and faster during the last decades and the players have got less time to get into an optimal stroke position. In this and the next Butterfly News Issue we will look at two topspin varieties which you can observe quite often at top level. The most successful table tennis player of the last years, Zhang Yining, will demonstrate them. The Butterfly player who won the Gold Medal in Peking and is leading the World Ranking List is known for her perfect technique and could be admired several times in our technique series. In the following picture series she proves also that she is able to play variable topspins with the forehand in extreme situations.

Starting phase – pictures 1-2: On **picture 1** we see Yining in between two strokes. The bat is in the neutral position which indicates that the Chinese doesn't yet know what ball she is going to receive. It is clearly visible though that she has lifted her right foot to get ready for a sidestep towards her forehand side. She also pushes off with her left front foot towards the right.





Picture 2 shows Yining's intentions. With a long sidestep she gets into the stroke position for a forehand topspin. It is interesting to see how she gets via her heel into the final foot position (**picture 3**). You can't see the end of the starting phase on the pictures but **picture 3** shows us that her main body weight is now on her bent right leg. The left leg is almost completely stretched. The heel is lifted off the floor and the foot position remains parallel. With this topspin variety she doesn't have time to twist her upper body.

Main phase – pictures 3 – 4: Yining only bends her hips slightly to the forehand side. The actual topspin results from an explosive arm movement. A slight inward rotation of the upper body supports the stroke and the right foot which is lifted off the ground also indicates an impulse which is directed upwards (see pictures 3 and 4). The leg is not stretched but is bent even more and pulled towards the hip so that the arm movement gains even more explosiveness. The arm movement follows a straight line forward and up but not as usual towards the head or the left side of the body. The arm remains on the right hand side above the right leg. The sideways movement in connection with the lowering of the body by bending the knees extremely means that Yining is now lower down than at that moment when she makes contact with the ball.



Follow through pictures 5 – 6: the pictures of the follow through show without a doubt how extremely fast and intensive Yining's sideway movement was. The most important factor is the right leg. Through the long sidestep to the forehand side it becomes a lever for the forehand topspin movement. Neither is the weight shifted over to the left side nor is the upper body rotated to the left side. The main part of this topspin variety is played through an explosive arm movement in connection with pushing off the right leg from the ground. This tendency can be seen more and more at top level table tennis because the players are forced to it because of a lack of time. On the other hand such an arm orientated topspin technique demands a lot of athleticism. Especially balance, coordination and explosive power in arms and leg muscles are a necessary condition for the success of this topspin variety.

