

Butterfly® NEWS

2009 02

Europe Top 12 - Düsseldorf

Boll wants to use home advantage to win his fourth title



There will be altogether eleven Butterfly players starting at the 39th European Top 12 on the 7th and 8th of February in Duesseldorf. Lead by the number 4 of the World Ranking List, Timo Boll and defending Champion Werner Schlager as well as the Bronze Medallist Krisztina Toth and the double Champion Tamara Boros, the players of the Tamasu Team have promising prospects to gain one of the desirable places on the

winning podium. The twelve best men and women of Europe are playing at the Burg-Waechter Castello, where also Butterfly partner Borussia Duesseldorf sometimes plays their home fixtures, for the crown of the continent.

More about this on the next page.

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Europe Top 12 in Düsseldorf

Boll wants to use home advantage to win his fourth title



Following the advice of the bookies the undoubtedly expected winner of the Europe Top 12 with prize money of 70.000 Euro is Timo Boll. The triple European Champion from Germany, who won the traditional tournament 2002 in Rotterdam, 2003 in Saarbruecken and 2006 in Copenhagen, is especially motivated after his unfortunate appearance last year in Frankfurt.

His knee injury was the cause for dropping out early in the preliminary round and forced him to a break lasting two month and prevented the double World Cup winner even from taking part in the Team WC in Guangzhou.

This is now in the past. „I am in good form and optimistic that I will end up with a better result than last year“, says Boll confidently and he has a good reason for this following the results of the past months. The player from Duesseldorf played in the final at the World Cup in Liege last autumn, won all three possible titles at the European Championships in St. Petersburg and collected three successive titles at the Pro Tour Highlights in Austria, Germany and Poland. Butterfly star Boll is looking forward to his appearance at the Burg Waechter Castello: „Playing one of the most traditional tournaments in Duesseldorf is especially motivating. In front of a home crowd I will give everything and I would like to play for the title again. But you cannot underestimate the other competitors – especially my Butterfly colleague Werner Schlager, who is the defending Champion, but also my team colleague Dimitrij Ovtcharov and of course Vladimir Samsonov is a candidate for the first place.“

Austrians Werner Schlager won Gold for the second time last year after 2000 and beat the White Russian Champion Vladimir Samsonov in the final. The Bronze Medallist of the EC, Schlager, knows that it will be a lot

07. February - 08. February 2009
LIEBHERR Europe Top 12,
Düsseldorf

11. February - 15. February 2009
Pro Tour: Kuwait Open,
Kuwait City

17. February - 21. February 2009
Pro Tour: Qatar Open,
Doha

11. March - 15. March 2009
Pro Tour: Indian Open,
Indore

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more difficult to repeat this success: „Timo is definitely the favourite, even more so in front of a home crowd in Duesseldorf. But I will try to use my chances just like in the year before.“ Schlager has at least a medal as a target, something the other four male Butterfly protagonists have also set their eyes on. The Greek Kalinikos Kreanga, whose international appearances become less and less frequent is one of the candidates with his attractive topspin game to win points and the spectators during short tournaments. The last time he moved into the limelight was during World Cup 2008 where he reached the semi-finals. Denmark's Europe Top 12 winner from 2004, Michael Maze, Croatia's routine Ex – World Cup winner, Zoran Primorac and Robert Gardos, the ambitious Austrian and 3rd of the EC are also playing with the Butterfly on their chest.

Even if five players in the women event are representing Butterfly their chances of winning the title are lower than the men's. Although Hungary's ever lasting Krisztina Toth, Croatia's Tamara Boros, who tirelessly is fighting for a comeback to the top, Romania's talent Daniela Dodean, White Russia's defensive expert Viktoria Pavlovic and Italy's counter hit specialist Wenling Tan-Monfardini are all good enough to win a medal but the favourites are defending Champion Li Jiao (Netherlands), Ex European Champion Liu Jia (Austria), Li Qian (Poland) as well as Germany's representative Wu Jiaduo, four of altogether seven naturalized Chinese in Europe, who are starting at the Europe Top 12.

The Participants of the Europe Top 12

(Butterfly players in bold)

Men

Timo Boll, Germany

Vladimir Samsonov, White Russia

Werner Schlager, Austria

Kalinikos Kreanga, Greece

Dimitrij Ovtcharov, Germany

Michael Maze, Denmark

Jörgen Persson, Sweden

Chen Weixing, Austria

Zoran Primorac, Croatia

Adrian Crisan, Romania

Robert Gardos, Austria

Tan Ruiwu, Croatia

Women

Liu Jia, Austria

Li Jiao, Netherlands

Li Qian, Poland

Wu Jiaduo, Germany

Krisztina Toth, Hungary

Tamara Boros, Croatia

Li Jie, Netherlands

Daniela Dodean, Romania

Viktoria Pavlovich, White Russia

Elizabeta Samara, Romania

Wenling Tan Monfardini, Italy

Ni Xia Lian, Luxembourg

New partner in Russia



We are pleased to take on board of Tamasu Butterfly Europe GmbH, Mr. Alexander Kozhevnikov as our Official Representative in Russia, starting from January 1st, 2009. Alex Kozhevnikov has been linked to us for more than 20 years by now and we hope that he, with all his experience and knowledge, could be a real hand for us in Russia to support development of our sports and our brand, help our Distributors and the Russia Table Tennis Federation in their activities.

Shunsaku Yamada,
President
Tamasu Co., Ltd., Japan



Butterfly help during the Danish Open



The organizers of the Danish Open may look back on a successful weekend. Numerous volunteers supported the association at this Pro Tour event so that the tournament could run smoothly. Butterfly provided the tables, the barriers and so on plus the outfit for all the helpers. On the picture you can see numerous children from the 9th and 10th grade of a table tennis sports school.

ITTF World Ranking, Mens (01/2009)



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

ITTF World Ranking, Women (01/2009)



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

(Butterfly-players are marked!)

World Champion Werner Schlager - part 23: Training

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. In the current ranking of the World Ranking List of January he is number 13. In September he won a bronze medal in the singles and a Silver medal in the doubles with the Dutch Trinko Keen at the European Championships in St. Petersburg. 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.

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, psychology 1, psychology 2

From a sports science point of view training is a complex process of actions with the aim to influence the improvement in sports by concrete plans. Who plans your training: You yourself or you together with your coach?

I plan my training together with my coach. Nowadays it has become very difficult to plan your training optimally because of the many competition commitments. Let's take the year 2008 as an example: it started with the Europe-Top-12, followed directly by the team WC. In May we won the Champions League. Then there were the Olympic Games and just

afterwards the World Cup followed by the EC. In between these „Highlights“ I played several Pro Tour events and so on.

When you are travelling how often do you train and what kind of training are you doing?

Usually I manage about ten sessions a week, six times table tennis, two endurance sessions and two strength training sessions.



Let's assume you had a home league match on a Sunday, the following weekend you play a Champions League Match in Granada for which you have to leave the Friday before. How would your training schedule look like from Monday to Friday?

Monday: a running session for regeneration

Tuesday: a table tennis session and a strength session

Wednesday: a table tennis session

Thursday: a table tennis session and endurance training

Friday: a table tennis session

On some days during the preparation phase of the season the players practice two to three times a day. How many hours of table tennis practice are possible on one day?

I cannot practice table tennis more than three hours (two sessions) a day since my operation on my toes.

Short but effective was Kalin Kreanga's answer to the question of how long one training session should last. Is it true that nowadays concentration and intensity are more important than long lasting training sessions?

That depends. An experienced player like Kreanga knows exactly what he must practice. His concentration during training is optimal. Surely he trains less quantity in comparison to a less experienced player but his training

quality compensates easily for that. The rule is: the more quality you have in training the shorter the sessions can be.

How long is an optimal training session for you and what should it include?

My optimal training session consists of 15 minutes warm-up, 60 minutes table tennis and 15 minutes stretching.

How long do you warm up before a competition?

There is no golden rule for that. Sometimes you don't know the exact start of a match. Therefore I always try to be in the hall two hours before the match starts to warm up under ideal competition conditions. During the 15 minutes warm-up I do some running and some gymnastics. The same rule applies here: Everybody should do their individual warm-up programme. Individuality is the key.

I assume that every training session has a main topic. What main topics could that be?

Technique, service, footwork and so on.

Do you practice your services during each training session with many balls?



Normally I don't do any extra service practice because I include them in my exercises designed for competition. If I decide to practice them I do it at the end.

Are there some days where you don't feel like practicing and you have to force yourself to go?

Yes, of course.

Do you play competition matches during training? Do you sometimes play for money, a meal or something like that? How important are training matches?

I often play matches during training but only for the honour. I consider training matches as being very important.

Critics of modern table tennis, among them quite a few coaches and players maintain, that it is almost impossible to train properly because of the number of fixtures (National Leagues, Champions League, National-, Continental-, World Championships, Pro Tour, Olympic Games and many more). The Chinese have much better opportunities to prepare intensively for important tournaments. What is your opinion about this?

I agree. The associations should not „overload“ the fixture list like this.

You are an experienced player and self-critical enough to tell what you did wrong during your training in the past. What did you change and do you think that completely new methods and ways of training could be developed?

In the past the quality of my training wasn't good enough. New methods will be developed, of course. That is a normal continuous process as long as knowledge increases.

If you don't warm up.... *you can't be saved!*

Meaningful training is only possible..... *with full concentration!*

Too much training*is as bad as too little!*

„Much training = good performance“.... *is out!*

During good practicing sessions..... *you are happy!*

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Paul Drinkhall, England

Ideally I would like to become Olympic Champion



Last December the Englishman Paul Drinkhall had a good reason to celebrate in the Spanish capital. The talented attacking player from the homeland of table tennis became Junior Vice-World Champion in Madrid. He only lost in the final 1:4 against the Chinese Chen Chien-An. This was a great success for the young British player who is well known for his spectacular attacking strokes. He is only 19 years old and undoubtedly the number 1 in Great Britain and the hope of British table tennis. He and his younger national team colleagues have got big targets. Right on top of the list are the Olympic Games 2012 in London. Until then Paul wants to climb up the ranking list so that he is not only participating but also winning in London. On the ranking list in January he is placed as number 124. In November Paul, who is playing in the Bundesliga for TTC Juelich, climbed up 40 places, but he wants to get right up to the top and that is not impossible.

Paul, you play for a country with great table tennis tradition, to be more precise, the country where table tennis was born. In the seventies and eighties of the last century the English men and women belonged to the best in Europe. Alan Cooke, Mathew Syed and Carl Prean held the English flag in the nineties. Then it became very quiet. Now you and your team colleagues of a young refreshing National Team are the hope for the future. How do you see the perspective for your team?

Apart from me there are three more good players of my age and a few who are a bit younger. But in comparison to the young Germans or Frenchmen we lack idols to whom we can look up to and who can guide us. In Germany Timo Boll is the

leading figure and in France there is Legout or Eloi. Therefore we must see that we have training camps with some experienced players and we must play as many international tournaments as possible. Then we will develop further.

You are playing in the Bundesliga. During the first year you were in Goennern and now you are playing for Juelich. Was this the right decision?

Absolutely, especially because of Joerg Roskopf. He has so much experience and helps me. After the games we talk about my matches. Even if I play badly I can still learn a lot by watching a top player. In England my coach is trying to make me the leader of our team. I am supposed to bring my knowledge from the German Bundesliga and the good players to the English Team.

Do you live in Juelich or are you travelling to the games?

I am travelling. Sometimes I extend my visits for one or two days and practice in Duesseldorf at the German Table Tennis Centre.

What do you expect of the Olympic Games 2012 in London?

In London I definitely want to start and get as far as possible. The opportunity of an Olympic home match doesn't come up that often.

Sometimes your performances are very up and down. Is that true?

Correct, I would say. During the last months I have been working intensively on that, to become more consistent. In England I am the number 1, the best. As a result of that my head didn't always work 100%. I learnt no matter if I play against weaker or better players to play with the same attitude. Formerly I played very well or poorly. Today I play well if I win and not so bad if I lose. I made good progress during the past year.

Your training conditions improved too.

Yes, indeed. In Sheffield in our training centre we have apart from ideal table tennis conditions also ideal surroundings, physical-medical and psychological care, optimal nourishment and relaxation facilities. Apart from that we have three coaches and a Chinese sparring partner of my age. Our Chinese head coach has unbelievable table tennis knowledge. We can trust him completely. So our team will continually develop and improve. Therefore I am optimistic that we can manage to qualify for the team event in London. We have a lot of potential and are always good for a surprise.

How did you get to table tennis and when did you start?

When I was eight years old my parents took my brother and me to a match on local level. They played matches and we tried to play a bit on another table. That was fun and we went with them more and more often. At school a teacher practiced with me and when I was ten years old I took part in training camps of the English Association. At the time Michel Gadat was the coach and I improved a lot during that year. He considered me worth promoting and from then onwards I was intensively promoted by the English Association.

When did you realize that you wanted to become a table tennis professional?

When I became European Cadet Champion. Before that I never thought about it. But then I realized that I could make it. Simultaneously Dimitrij Ovtcharov became European Junior Champion. Then I decided that I also wanted to become European Junior Champion. I moved to the training centre in Nottingham and concentrated fully on table tennis.

Now your dream came true.

Not quite. I am a professional. But if I am really honest I would really like to become Olympic Table Tennis Champion. I am thinking about Werner Schlager. Nobody was thinking about him when he became World Champion in 2003

in Paris. If you are in the top 20 of the world you always have a chance. Naturally the Chinese are very strong and they will remain strong. But everybody can be beaten. When top 20 players meet each other the head decides.

Until then you will have control of that. What do you think about your game at the moment? What is your strength and what are your weaknesses where you have to work on?

I must become more consistent with my first and second hit. I admit that I love the risky aggressive game but if I look at the top players like Timo Boll, Vladimir Samsonov or Werner Schlager they don't play that aggressively. They play with a lot of pressure, a lot of spin and place the balls very well. That makes them special. When I started to work on that I completely lost my aggressiveness and played confused. Now I am trying to combine aggressiveness and consistency. Not easy, but I am making progress.

If you were ITTF President and you could change something in table tennis for the better, what would that be?

I think the rules concerning gluing, boosters and tuners must be defined in such a way that they can be measured and wrong doing can be punished accordingly. At the moment fairness is not given and that in a sport which was considered being very fair.

Since when have you been a Butterfly player and what material do you play with?

Right from the start. I am very happy that I am playing with Butterfly material. I play with the BOLL SPIRIT blade and TENERGY 05 on both sides.

Jun Mizutani's high forehand service with a sudden change of direction

Jun Mizutani is known as the Japanese player who might make it into the top 10 of the World Ranking List. At the moment he is ranked number 29. In the last Butterfly News Issue the 19 year old Butterfly player showed us the classical opening of the game: forehand service – backhand topspin – forehand topspin from the backhand side. We did not look at the service (miniature picture) last time but we promised you that for this issue. The brilliant technician Jun has also developed his very own service variety. He belongs to those who throw up the ball far above their heads and execute some surprising arm movements. The picture series in front of us gives us one example.

Starting phase: Pictures 1-6: Jun is standing beside the table with his back sideways towards his opponent (**picture 1 and ill. 1**). His right upper leg seems to touch the edge of the table. His feet are parallel about shoulder wide apart. The ball has left the hand already and can't be seen on the picture. Jun's eyes follow the ball which is about one to two metres high. His bat is in front of his body.



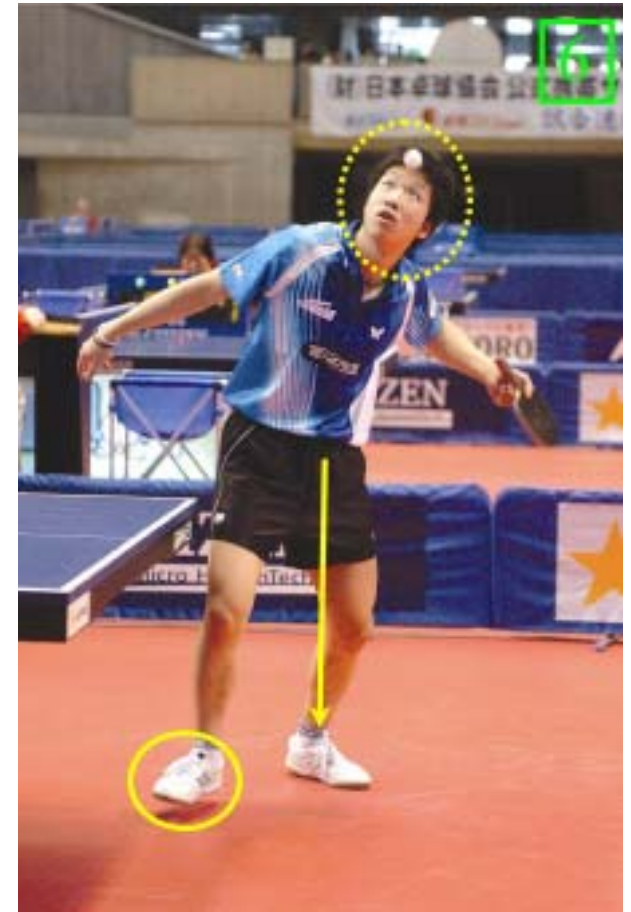


While he is taking the arm which has thrown up the ball down (**picture 2**) his other arm draws a semi-circle with the bat in the direction of the left hip. Like most top players he has taken his fingers away from the grip for a forehand serve. He holds the bat between his index finger and thumb to enable better wrist movement and speed. On **picture 3** we can see that the arm which has thrown up the ball is down to shoulder height. The bat has reached the end of the backswing to the right.



14 Technique Tips

Pictures 4-6: Jun is now pulling the bat fast in the opposite direction (dotted line hinted at on **picture 3**) and takes it to the end of the backswing (**picture 6**). On **picture 4** we can also see that Jun transfers his body weight to the back leg because his front foot is lifted off the floor (**pictures 4/5**). On **picture 6** it doesn't have contact with the floor any more. The shifting of weight has to happen because Jun has taken his playing arm far back into an extreme backswing position. He also bends his right knee which leads to the conclusion that he is lowering his body weight. It is also interesting to see how his eyes are still fixed on the ball which is now in height of his forehead. The reason why Jun is moving his backswing to the opposite direction – first to the right and then to the left – has surely got something to do with the fact that Jun tries to confuse his opponent and distract him from the moment when he is making contact with the ball. This kind of opposing movement is only possible when the ball is thrown up high otherwise there wouldn't be enough time.





Main phase – pictures 7/8: Jun makes contact with the ball in height of his chest. **Picture 7** has been taken just before making contact with the ball. The playing arm is extremely bent at the elbow so that he can lift his playing arm up to shoulder level. That way he has got more space to move the hand and the bat. It is also obvious that Jun lowers his upper body and is getting ready to move forwards. Exactly at that moment when Jun is making contact with the ball he puts his right front foot down. Some players actually stamp on the floor during the service which was forbidden a few years ago. This stamping (it doesn't have to be that noisy) while making contact with the ball has the advantage that the players are able to achieve optimal timing and rhythm for a very complicated movement. On **picture 8** we see that the front foot is compensating the impulse whereas the back foot is only touching the floor with the toes. The position of the bat is surprising. Not only the extremely high elbow which indicates that Jun has pulled the bat up after he has made contact with the ball but also the position of the bat could not be expected after the position before (**picture 7**). In any case he has turned the bat with lightning speed in a semi-circle from the outside inside. A comparison between **picture 7 and 8** shows this clearly. Watching the follow through (**pictures 9/10**) the inward movement becomes even clearer. If Jun has hit the ball with the bat directed upwards the service would have sidespin. It could also be possible that Jun has turned the bat only to deceive the opponent and hit the ball after the turning movement. Then he would have hit the ball with the bat angle in **picture 7** and it would have been a sidespin serve. Finally we can't answer this question. It is a fact though that – and this can be seen with many Asian players- the suddenly changed service movement may and can lead the opponent to a wrong conclusion about the spin of the serve. This all happens very quickly and underlines the difficulty of such a service movement. It demands brilliant coordination with high precision.



16 Technique Tips

Follow through – pictures 9-11: Jun continues to move the bat in a circle inwards and upwards. Simultaneously he lifts his right foot and starts moving inwards with his body to achieve the optimal basic position. The front leg is the turning point to get back to the table.

On **pictures 9/10** we can see as well how Jun resolves his service grip to go back to his normal shake-hand grip. On **picture 10** he is still not back to the neutral position, whereas on **picture 11** he is back into the optimal stroke position to play the next stroke. The feet are parallel, the knees are slightly bent and the playing arm is in front of the body. The end of the story can be found in the last Butterfly Issue, if you haven't read it already.



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Information and Registration at the Hessian Table Tennis Federation, Post Box 1140,
35411 Pohlheim, Germany, e-mail: geschaeftsstelle@httv.de or at www.httv.de

