



Butterfly®

NEWS

05 2007

Individual WC in Zagreb as an Indicator for the Olympic Games

For the second time within two month the Balkan is the main stage of a big international table tennis event. The Individual World Championships (21st-27th of May) in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, begins about seven weeks after the European Title fights in Belgrade and are very important in point of view of Peking 2008. The motto for all the Olympic candidates is apart from hunting medals and titles collecting points for the World Ranking List.

A high number of points on the ITTF Ranking is important for a good starting position in the race for the 20 direct places for Peking in the women and men events as well as the places behind the top players for participation in the following qualification tournaments. In Zagreb the top favourites will try to achieve good results for a favourable seeding at the Olympic tournament in China's metropolis.

More about this on the next page!

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A repetition of the successful results of the Butterfly stars at the previous Single World Championships 2005 in Shanghai with six medals (three times gold, once silver and twice bronze) is well possible. The „Butterflies“ will be represented by the new triple European Champion Timo Boll (Germany) and the third from Shanghai Oh Sang-Eun (South-Korea) and Werner Schlager (Austria), who won the Singles Title in Paris 2003, in the men's event. The women are just as promising and belong to the best in the world with double defending Champion and top favourite Zhang Yining (China), who is number 1 on the World ranking List, and Guo Yue (China) and Tie Yana (Hong Kong), who will be serving for Tamasu for the first time at a WC and the Chinese Gao Jun starting for America.



Werner Schlager: Gold again after 2003?

Especially exciting for the table tennis world is the expected fight in the men's competition between China's top players on the one hand and Boll as the probably most serious challenger from the old continent. The „King of Belgrade“, who won gold in all three events at the EC in Serbia (Single, Double and Team), is still lacking a WC medal in the singles despite all his successes during his impressive career up to now. In Shanghai Boll's try for a place on the podium failed in the round of the last sixteen against Liu Guozheng. The former number one of the World Ranking List corrected a point when he had a match ball against a local Chinese and received the Fair Play prize after losing the game. The Butterfly star, who won his first two important EC titles in the singles and doubles on the international stage five years ago in Zagreb, comforted himself afterwards with a silver medal in the doubles with his partner Christian Süss.

In the centre of attention are the Japanese talents of Butterfly Sports Director Mario Amizic. Zagreb will show also looking in the direction of Peking and the Single WC 2009 in local Yokohama how much the young stars around Jun Mizutani have progressed.

In the women's event the experts predict only roles as spectators for the European women in the deciding rounds for medals. In point of view of the super power China and further Asian top players the best European athletes with the local hero and former WC third Tamara Boros, Europe Top 12 Finalist Nicoleta Stefanova (Italy) and former European Champion Nicole Struse (Germany) are hoping for reasonable results for the qualification for the Olympic Games.

21. May - 27. May 2007
LIEBHERR World Table Tennis Championships, Zagreb

14. June - 17. June 2007
Pro Tour: Volkswagen Korea Open

21. June - 24. June 2007
Pro Tour: Volkswagen Japan Open



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ITTF World Ranking, Mens (05/2007)



1	MA Lin CHN	16	CHUAN Chih-Yuan TPE
2	WANG Liqin CHN	17	CHEN Weixing AUT
3	BOLL Timo GER	18	SMIRNOV Alexei RUS
4	WANG Hao CHN	19	MAZE Michael DEN
5	OH Sang Eun KOR	20	KONG Linghui CHN
6	SAMSONOV Vladimir BLR	21	LIU Guozheng CHN
7	Chen Qi CHN	22	KORBEL Petr CZE
8	MA Long CHN	23	LEE Jung Woo KOR
9	RYU Seung Min KOR	24	KO Lai Chak HKG
10	HAO Shuai CHN	25	GAO Ning SIN
11	SCHLAGER Werner AUT	26	KAN Yo JPN
12	LI Ching HKG	27	CRISAN Adrian ROU
13	HOU Yingchao CHN	28	PRIMORAC Zoran CRO
14	JOO Se Hyuk KOR	29	CHEUNG Yuk HKG
15	KREANGA Kalinikos GRE	30	BLASZCZYK Lucjan POL



Farewell from Gönnern:
Boll, Grujic, Rosskopf

The most spectacular change for the moment was now announced: Juelich, the second from the bottom of the table, managed to sign the German table tennis legend Joerg Rosskopf, who was without a contract.

„I had many offers from Spain, France, Italy, Russia and also from the Bundesliga“, said Mr Table Tennis, „I looked through everything and decided then for Juelich – it is an interesting young team and I knew the surroundings from my brother, who played there.“ The „Child of the Bundesliga“ remains in the German elite class as an attraction. „I would like to keep playing for another one or two years so I didn't want to move far away“, explains the 37-year-old from the Butterfly club Goennern his decision. He has three children of whom two aged twelve and nine years must go to school. „Now I can keep my home and training place“, comments the left handed player, „Timo Boll, Bobo Grujic and I wanted to continue training in our training group in Hoechst and Frankfurt.“

ITTF World Ranking, Women (05/2007)



1	ZHANG Yining CHN	16	LIN Ling HKG
2	WANG Nan CHN	17	HIRANO Sayaka JPN
3	GUO Yan CHN	18	CAO Zhen CHN
4	GUO Yue CHN	19	SUN Bei Bei SIN
5	LI Xiaoxia CHN	20	SHEN Yanfei PRK
6	TIE Yana HKG	21	ZHANG Rui HKG
7	Li Jia Wei SIN	22	PARK Mi Young KOR
8	WANG Yue Gu SIN	23	FUKUOKA Haruna JPN
9	NIU Jianfeng CHN	24	WU Jiaduo GER
10	JIANG Huajun HKG	25	LI Qian POL
11	FUKUHARA Ai JAP	26	STEFF Mihaela ROU
12	KIM Kyung Ah KOR	27	TAN MONFARDINI Wenling ITA
13	GAO Jun USA	28	PAVLOVICH Viktoria BLR
14	LIU Jia AUT	29	DING Ning CHN
15	Li Jiao NED	30	LAU Sui Fei HKG
		30	TOTH Krisztina HUN

(Butterfly-players are marked!)

Timo Boll's Column

My farewell from Goennern is also the end of an era for me

Hello dear fans and readers,

The month before the Single World Championships in Zagreb finished a little bit sad for me. It has been known for a while that I am going to play for the German record Champion and Butterfly Club Borussia Duesseldorf next season so that finally the day came, where I had to say farewell to TTV Goennern. My last match for the club, for which I played for twelve years and to whom I am really grateful, meant in a way the end of an era for me.

I managed to push thoughts about this day to the side for a long time because of the preparation for the WC, but when the day came I had to pull myself together, because I didn't want to break out in tears. Even though I think that such emotions at the end of such a deciding and important part of my life should be normal. The one who can take that easily is not a human being.

Luckily I managed together with my team to beat Mueller Wuerzburger Hofbraeu at the end of the Bundesliga season. They



managed, in opposite to us, to reach the play offs and I was glad that I won both my singles. I tried to look at the games as one of the few opportunities to get some match practice for the WC and tried to concentrate accordingly. Reflecting on it afterwards I must say, that I am glad to have finished my time in Goennern with victories. Defeat for my team or for me would not have been a proper farewell, because we could celebrate so many great and also unexpected successes here.

Even more I regret that we didn't reach the final in the Champions League once more. Such a setting would have been the best for a farewell match. Being honest I have to admit despite all the emotions during the match against Wuerzburg that the real farewell match for me was the second champions League Semi Final against Royal Villette Charleroi. During that match I had very special farewell feelings and that was the real end to my time in Goennern for me.

Naturally all my years in Goennern passed through my head during the Wuerzburg fixture. Especially valuable for me, is the memory of our first victory in the Champions League. Nobody expected that and therefore we were especially happy. That was simply gigantic. Right the opposite happened towards the end of the season during the first Semi Final in the Kings Class in



Charleroi when I gave away seven match balls against the European Champion Vladimir Samsonov and with that our chances to participate again in the final.

Generally looking back on the time in Goennern I think it was nice that practically nothing has changed in the club since my junior years, but in the end it was exactly for that reason that Goennern didn't expand further that I couldn't stay. The club was always lead professionally, but didn't take the step up to the next level. Therefore I couldn't prolong my contract in Goennern once more. It hurts, of course, to see that Goennern was struggling to get the license for the next Bundesliga season and I hope that Goennern will be able to continue. I am not only hoping that because I feel for the club but also because the Bundesliga needs a club like Goennern, because Goennern is one of the few clubs which supports young German talents.

I don't have a bad conscience that the club lost even more sponsors after my decision to play for Duesseldorf. In my opinion I gave Goennern a lot back of what they invested in my development. For me there was no real possibility to stay. As hard as this might sound in this context: this is also proff sport.

A part of professionalism for me is also to focus entirely on Zagreb now. At the moment it is almost impossible for me to train harder

and better after my little break after the EC in Belgrade. I got good support through my Butterfly colleagues Werner Schlager, Michael Maze and Bastian Steger who trained one after the other with me in my training group in Hoechst.

The only minus from my point of view is the lack of more competitions. In between Belgrade and Zagreb I only had two Bundesliga matches on my schedule. I have to compensate the lack of competition through intensive training and training matches. That doesn't replace real competition but the level of training is very high.

It looks like that I can start in Zagreb well prepared. At the same time I am quite relaxed, because I know what it takes to win a medal at the WC. You also need a little bit of luck, which I didn't have up to now. I hope to succeed this time and do everything what I can do to prepare myself optimally. If I don't succeed then it is a pity but not the end of the world.

Until next month

Timo Boll



Timo's own Homepage: <http://www.timo-boll.de>

Joo Se Hyuk: The Low Forehand – Chop – Defence

The second of the WC 2003 demonstrates pure athletics

In our Butterfly News issue 2-2007 the meaning of the modern defensive game was pointed out explicitly. There are still excellent defence specialists among the world class players. One of them is the South-Korean defender Joo Se Hyuk, who won a silver medal at the World Championships 2003 in Paris. In a memorable and unbelievably dramatically final the Butterfly player lost closely to his Austrian Butterfly colleague Werner Schlager. Joo is at the moment the best defender in the world ranked number 13 on the World ranking List.

After we looked at the forehand chop of the former Japanese national player Hiroshi Shibutani in height of the table – the basic variety – the right handed player Joo demonstrates the low or late variety. Like all modern defenders he plays his forehand without pimples (TACKIFIRE D with a 1,9mm sponge), which enables him to interrupt his opponent's game by a fearful forehand loop.

Now let's have a closer look at Joo's late forehand chop.

Picture 1: At the end of the starting phase Joo is still facing the table frontally. He has moved his bat up sideways a little bit above shoulder height.



07 Stars under the magnifier

Picture 2: Now he begins his stroke. Joo puts his weight on the right left and takes a step forward with his left leg. He turns his upper body right towards his playing arm and is now standing square to the table. This can be seen clearly on picture 9 from the frontal perspective. At the same time he takes down his upper body by bending his knees slightly downwards.

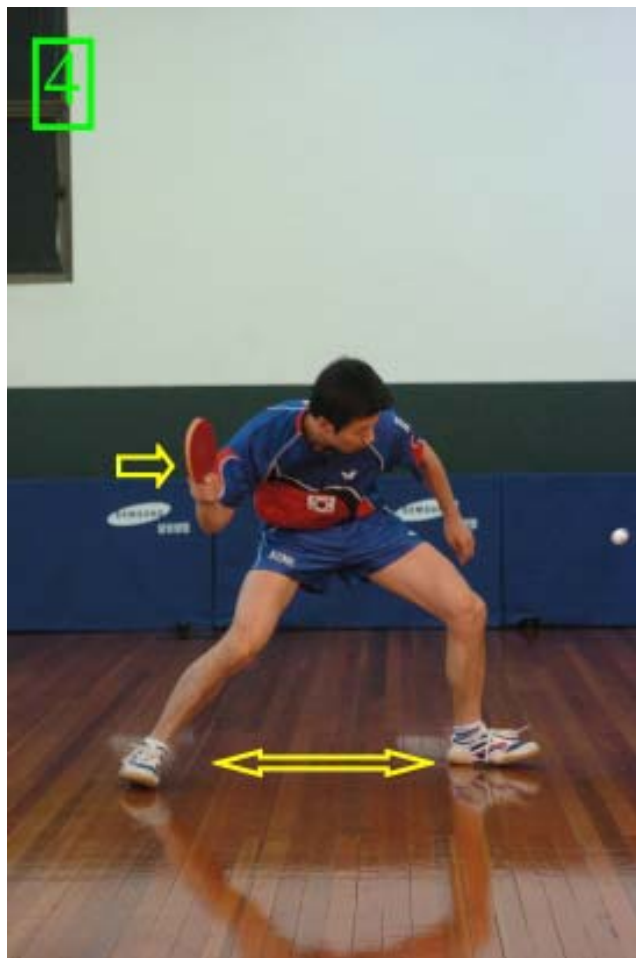


Picture 3: Joo keeps moving downwards and progressively bends down his upper body at the hips. His main body weight is moving lower to reach a stable position when hitting the ball.



08 Stars under the magnifier

Picture 4: Just before making contact with the ball he has already reached a very low position, which demands unbelievably much strength of the upper leg muscles and a great deal of agility and flexibility. A look at his bat tells us that it is still in shoulder height and the main stroke with the arm hasn't happened yet. In the meantime Joo has only moved his arm further sideways away from the body without stretching it completely of course.



Picture 5: The point of contact with the ball is very low and clearly under the height of the table. A comparison between picture 4 and 5 points out how speedily the movement of the arm has to be: the so called „cutting“ with the forearm. The term „cutting“ originates from the comparison of the forearm technique to that of a wood-cutter. Apart from that you can clearly see how the weight has shifted to the left leg in front and the player moves virtually „into the ball“. This becomes also clear by Joo's upper body, which seems to be above the ball from this perspective. The angle of the bat is slightly open in this case. Depending on the speed and the rotation of the coming ball as well as your own purpose (a lot, medium or little backspin) the angle may vary from horizontally to wide open.



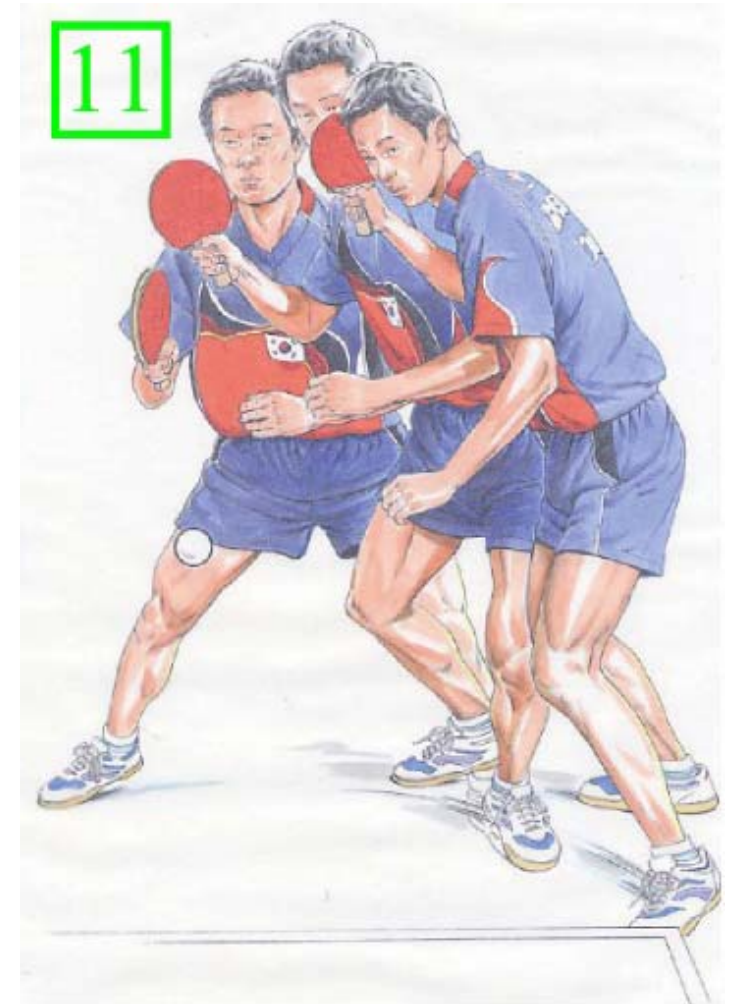
09 Stars under the magnifier

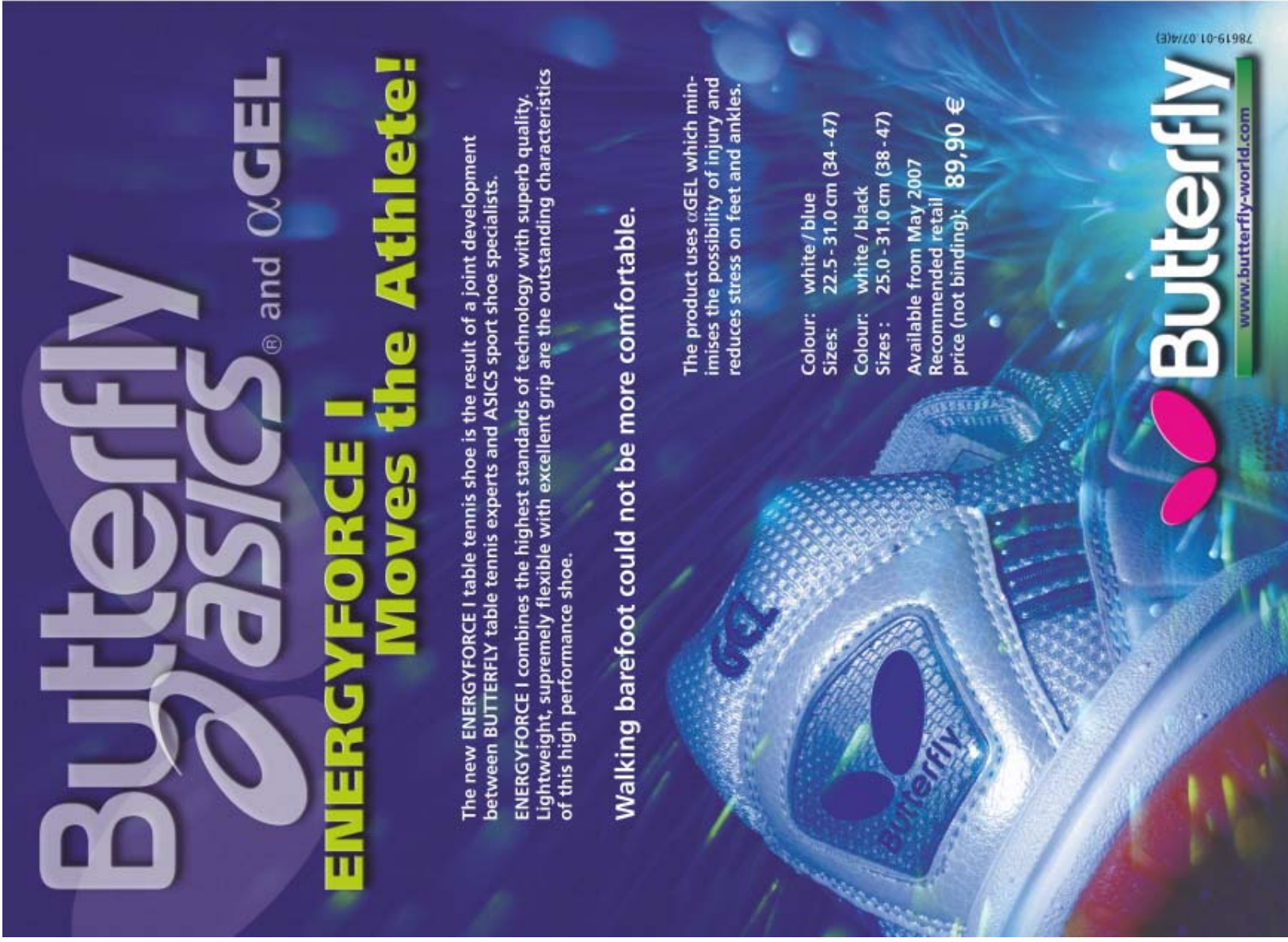
Pictures 6, 7, 8: At the end of the movement Joo stretches his arm nearly completely, caused by the extremely fast forearm action and then swings his playing arm forwards like a spoon. (Picture 7). During that period he begins to straighten his upper body to come back to the neutral position (Picture 8).



10 Stars under the magnifier

Pictures 9 and 10 show Joo from a front perspective. You can see clearly how square he is standing to the table. Drawing 11 – from the front as well shows how Joo opens his position to the ball from a parallel neutral stance to a square position to be able to hit the ball in front of the middle of his body (picture 5).





The advertisement features a close-up of a white and blue Butterfly Energyforce I tennis shoe. The shoe has a mesh upper and a white sole with a blue butterfly logo. The background is a dark blue gradient with light blue and white abstract shapes.

Butterfly asics® and αGEL

ENERGYFORCE I Moves the Athlete!

The new ENERGYFORCE I table tennis shoe is the result of a joint development between BUTTERFLY table tennis experts and ASICS sport shoe specialists.

ENERGYFORCE I combines the highest standards of technology with superb quality. Lightweight, supremely flexible with excellent grip are the outstanding characteristics of this high performance shoe.

Walking barefoot could not be more comfortable.

The product uses αGEL which minimises the possibility of injury and reduces stress on feet and ankles.

Colour: white / blue
Sizes: 22.5 - 31.0 cm (34 - 47)

Colour: white / black
Sizes : 25.0 - 31.0 cm (38 - 47)

Available from May 2007
Recommended retail price (not binding): 89,90 €

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World Champion Werner Schlager – Part 2: Counter Hit

In 2003 Werner Schlager became sensationally World Champion in the Men Singles in Paris. Not all experts thought this possible. The rise of the Austrian to the top of the world was not easy. With courage, strength and endurance the right handed player managed the stony way to the top. Werner Schlager lives and lived table tennis like nobody else. His professional attitude towards sport is exemplary. For Butterfly the 34 year old is an important counsellor concerning the development of products. In his book: „Matchball – Dreams and Triumphs“, which was published last year, 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: technique, tactic, psychology, endurance, organisation of training, competition, player development and culture, material, rules, coaches. Barely practical issues. The Butterfly team and Werner Schlager wish you, dear reader, good entertainment and joy. If you have further questions about a topic, send us a mail.

If you talk about a counter hit everybody thinks at once about knocking in with forehand and backhand.

A meaningful ritual.



Do you start knocking in by counter hitting or do you start straight away with looping?

I start classically with the counter hit before I move on to the topspin. When I counter hit the ball, I get a good feeling about how well I have glued my bat.

The counter hit is generally known as an offensive basic stroke. 30 years ago it was even on top level used successfully, the Englishman Desmond Douglas, for example, was almost a

counter hitting machine. Is the counter hit in the spin orientated game of nowadays still important? In which game situations is it still used?

The men use it only in emergency situations. From my point of view the reason for this is that the topspin (through the rotation) is the safer stroke. If I play a counter hit with normal rubbers, I must identify the existing rotation of the ball exactly. Therefore the classical counter hit players play with short pimples. Examples: Johnny Huang or all classical „pen-holder“ Asians like Liu Guoliang, Tosiho Tasaki, he Zhi Wen, and so on.

Some teaching books maintain that the counter hit is a smash with reduced speed. What do you think about that?

Correct. According to this all counter hitting players from today should be called „smash-players“...

13 Tips and Tricks

The counter hit is ideal for learning the rhythm: footwork with shifting the weight for the legs, and body – playing arm coordination, reaction and timing. Do you agree?

Yes, absolutely.

When counter hitting with the forehand the wrist should be straight, so it shouldn't be used, whereas it plays an important role for the backhand. Do you agree and can you explain to role of the wrist during a backhand counter hit to our readers?

You don't need wrist movement for a counter hit. If you want to develop a smash, I have got the following solution: the short movement of the hand with a backhand counter hit lacks the necessary power for a hard stroke. This power results from the additional movement of the wrist. The disadvantage is that the wrist movement causes more mistakes. Therefore you shouldn't use it for the forehand.

Can you give us some advice, how it could be easier to learn the backhand counter hit? The forehand counter hit is very often easier for new beginners.

The fast counter hitting stroke (with wrist movement) needs a lot of practice. Therefore you should be satisfied with a backhand counter hit without the use of the wrist in the beginning.

During the so called control (consistency) exercises in junior training sessions the number of strokes without a mistake is counted 10x, 20x, 30x and so on. That is supposed to improve consistency and concentration. What do you think about such exercises?

Not only for counter hits the right way to consistency.

Could you describe the exact difference between a forehand topspin and a forehand counter hit? From the outside you can hardly see the difference in movement with short forehand and backhand movements for example when playing a counter topspin over the table.

I define topspin by the amount of spin I put into the ball. When counter hitting I just forget about the spin the ball has got.

In lower playing classes you see very often typical counter hitting players, who are looking for an open attacking rally starting with long serves. They play very often with short pimples. Is it easier to counter hit with them?

Yes, as I said above counter hitting becomes more consistent with rubbers, which have less grip.

Did you have to practice counter hitting a lot, when you were a young?

I can't remember many counter hitting exercises. I think, with the forehand I moved quickly on to the topspin. I developed my backhand topspin some time later.

Are you still playing exercises, where the counter hit is playing an important role?

No. Now I only practice the counter hit when knocking in.



Butterfly material expert Taisei Imamura, 49, tells us about the new blades and rubbers for the season 2007/08. In his contribution today he describes four new blades:

The two new rubbers SOLCION and TACKINESS CHOP II.

Mr. Imamura, the new rubber SOLCION is supposed to be a brand new rubber. What is so new about it?

Indeed it is our first rubber which can and should be played without gluing and that without reducing the speed. The sound is correct too. For our top players the forehand is probably still a bit too soft but it is definitely o.k. for the backhand. The supposition that the SOLCION is at its best is the right blade. The PHOTINO is the best at the moment.

If you compare the up-to-now fastest Butterfly rubber BRYCE with the SOLCION, what is the difference?

SOLCION is faster without gluing. We are convinced that we are heading into a new direction with SOLCION, which will make us forget the time of fresh gluing very quickly. An exciting future.

Let's talk about the opposite of the SOLCION, the much slower TACKINESS CHOP II. An improved TACKINESS C?

No, not an improved TACKINESS C, a new version. That is very simple. We changed the sponge of the TACKINESS CHOP. It has about the same hardness as a SRIVER L sponge. Through this the TACKINESS CHOP II gains more speed without losing the extreme backspin possibilities of the soft surface. TACKINESS C players are normally defensively orientated players, who push a lot, and also prefer the backspin defence. The TACKINESS CHOP II makes it possible to play a little bit more offensive with extreme spin.



So the TACKINESS CHOP II is not an improved TACKINESS C but has a harder sponge and is therefore the more offensive choice.

That is correct. There are still many players in the lower classes, which prefer control and the defensive way of playing and play with the TACKINESS C. They should keep doing this without worrying. Those who would like to play just a little bit faster, can change now without having to move on to TACKINESS D which definitely has less grip than the TACKINESS C.

Thank you for your explanations, Mr Imamura

www.butterfly-world.com

NEW: In regular intervals our Butterfly material expert Taisei Imamura informs us about all the specific terms connected with table tennis material.

Material from A - Z

All-round blades

An all-round player is a player, who doesn't want to decide on one particular strategy, meaning only defensive or only offensive. Many different skills are necessary especially for developing a good technique with younger players. During the basic technical training the children and youngsters should learn all the different strokes including the defensive ones. By that the two target groups for all-round blades are defined.

With the exception of the GRUBBA CARBON ALL+ and BALSACARBO X3 ALL+, our two CARBON blades in the all-round category, all our all-round models are produced from high class nature wood. In comparison to the offensive blades they are altogether softer. The result is that they are especially suited for topspin with a lot of feeling. On top of that they give you a high degree of control and an excellent feeling for the ball. Therefore it is not surprising, that players in higher classes prefer the all-round blade. In any case we recommend all-round blades for juniors, who are still learning the basic techniques, before they decide their own style.

ANDREJ GRUBBA ALL+(85g) is the blade which is used most in the ALL-class. It is a relatively soft construction with five layers which turns it into a blade with a lot of feeling. Therefore it has got so many fans.

GRUBBA VARIANT ALL has also 5 layers but is a little bit lighter (80g) and slower but very precise. It offers a lot of control.



The 5 layered GRUBBA PRO ALL- is our classical all-round blade with a big racket head. Because of the higher weight (90g) it has a lot of control but also a lot of power. That, of course, is depending on the choice of rubbers. Defenders prefer it because of the racket head.

TIMO BOLL ALL+(85g) is a little bit harder than the above mentioned blades. That is because of the harder outside layers. This very direct 5 layer all-round blade is especially suited for the modern spin attack close to the table without neglecting the all-round control.

MAZE ADVANCE ALL+ is our only blade with 7 layers, which makes it clearly harder and more powerful than the other blades. We recommend it to players, who like a blade with little resonance and don't want to miss control.

GRUBBA CARBON ALL+ conveys the typical carbon feeling. By using thinner layers it is lighter (85g) than the offensive carbon blades and of course reduced in speed.

BALSACARBON X3 ALL+ is with 80g our light weight. The combination of the very light balsa nucleus layer, the two carbon layers and the outside limba layers has produced a blade, which uniquely combines the typical balsa feeling with the hardness of the carbon.





About the EC in Belgrade.....

Peking 2008 is my big target

Altogether the EC was very successful for me, of course. Even if I didn't play in the team event, I was proud to be a part of the team which won Gold for Germany for the first time ever!

In the singles I had very awkward opponents in the first two rounds, but I managed to come through. In the next round against Adrian Crisan I played best during this tournament and won 4:1. I went on to the round of the last 16 and had to play against Kalinikos Kreanga. I was down 3:0 and 10:8 and nearly managed to turn the match round. I fought myself back into the game point by point to the deciding seventh set, which I then lost 11:8. So my dream about the Quarterfinals and perhaps a possible medal went to pieces. Despite that the victory against Adrian Crisan was the Highlight.

About his expectations for the WC in Zagreb...

At the last WC in Shanghai I could beat J.M. Saive after being down 3:0 in sets. That was something very special. I was even close to get to the round of the last 16, but lost closely 11:9 in the deciding set to Poland's number 1 Lucjan Błaszczyk. I hope that I can achieve similar results in Zagreb as during the last WC. But it surely will be very, very difficult, because there are so many good players at a WC, against whom you can lose.

Bastian Steger climbed up to number 36 of the World Ranking List in April, his best placement in so far. The 26-year-old worked his way upwards slowly but steadily and he still has great plans. During his junior years he was not considered as one of the big talents, but he proved all his critics wrong and has been a member of the German National Team for years. The right handed Bundesliga player from TTC Frickenhausen is humble and he isn't conceited because of his successes. If he couldn't improve any more he would stop playing. So the very sympathetic Bavarian is permanently looking for new ways to optimize his game. His special stroke is the backhand loop but the forehand is not bad either. He is connected with Butterfly through a long partnership, which he values a lot.

About Timo Boll's chances to become World Champion...

Timo Boll has got the chance to become World Champion of course. He is one of the best players. On the other hand there are also 10 other players, who can win the title. The Chinese always belong to the favourites anyway. You must be in top form and you need that little bit of luck for a tournament like this. Timo is definitely good enough to beat the Chinese. They are a little bit afraid of him.

About his first Bundesliga season in Frickenhausen...

At the moment we are number two on the table and on a good way to reach the play-offs. I am very happy here and am playing better and better. It is great fun to train and play with this team. I can still learn a lot from our coach Qiu Jian Xin. He is a clever fox and a brilliant tactician during the games.

About the Olympic Games 2008 in Peking...

It is my big target to be part of it, in the singles and the team event.

About the numerous Chinese Legionaries in all the different National Federations of the ITTF...

The Chinese are the best in the world but I don't like the development that they are competing for all these different countries.

About the defeat in the first round of a big Pro Tour Tournament...

I could have played better but I just couldn't fulfil my potential and lost 4:0, which is disappointing, but life goes on.

About the exhausting life of a permanently travelling table tennis professional...

Sometimes you are away for two or three weeks and hardly get time to practice. Then you don't play on the level you want to play. You probably also lack physical fitness. That is sometimes very difficult but it is all part of it. You have got to get used to win even if you are not 100% fit. Afterwards nobody asks why you lost. The only thing that counts is win or loss.

About the head, which wasn't free...

It is like watching a different film in your head. It is very important in sports, that your head is clear and that you can focus precisely on the game. You are not properly in the game and you don't find a way to your own game. The spectators may support you and it still doesn't help to get out of it. I honestly don't know why this happens sometimes. It is very difficult to get out of this state of mind again.

About playing like in „trance“...

That happens just as quickly as you get into a negative state. During a negative period it can happen, and that is what you are hoping for, that you hit two or three brilliant balls. Suddenly everything goes by itself. You reach a state as if you are playing in „trance“ and a bomb could explode in the other corner of the hall and you wouldn't notice. You just keep playing and you have this unbelievable self-confidence.

About the team game table tennis...

I really enjoy playing for a team, fight for the others and see how happy they are for me. I think that is great, especially in the National Team, because there is a really good

atmosphere. During the WC in Bremen everybody could see that we belong to the top of the world and stand a chance for a medal in Peking 2008.

About the competition for a place on the National Team...

There are less free places than players for the National Team. On the one hand that is a pity on the other hand competition improves business. Each player must show results and cannot rest on his achievements. We are all under pressure. If I play poorly, I will resign myself. The others would do the same, because all of them are realistic enough to estimate their own positions correctly. It is only hard, if you have played well yourself and you are not allowed in.

About the attraction of table tennis...

I would like to keep going as a table tennis professional for a few more years. There are still things I can improve on. I still haven't fulfilled my potential completely, otherwise I would stop. If I knew that I couldn't improve further, it wouldn't make sense any more. I work day after day to find something new and try to improve. That is also the attraction of table tennis.

About the upcoming fresh gluing prohibition...

It is difficult to say in which direction table tennis will go without gluing. But I don't think that a lot will change. Everybody must get used to the rule change. In the beginning every player will have his problems, but then they will get used to it.

About the speed in table tennis...

Faster than now, is hardly imaginable. Despite that I believe that it still will get a bit faster. You see the development up to now and it kept getting faster. Perhaps they will say in 20 years time how slowly we play now.