

Butterfly®

NEWS

November 2004

Gold for Timo Boll



Timo Boll is hardly unbeatable at the moment. After his titles in the last month at the Polish Open and at the Volkswagen German Open World's No. 9 again secured the title in the final of the men's singles of the Austrian Open as well. He beat the Belgian Jean-Michel Saive in clear five games by 11:5, 11:8., 11:7, 7:11 and 11:8. In the doubles on the side of Christian Süß Timo Boll once more won Bronze. This duo altogether won twice Gold, once Silver and once Bronze at five starts. By this they have qualified for the best of the ITTF ProTour in December in Peking just like Timo Boll in the singles.

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Boll 's Message to China

The solo of a world star can't be more impressive: to win medals at the most important tournament of one's home country proves the potential as a player as well as mental strength. Timo Boll has proved this in Leipzig on the second weekend of November and carried the big expectations burdened on his shoulders. At the German



Open the top-player of the German Bundesliga club TTV RE-BAU Gönnern won the titles in the singles and in the doubles with his partner Christian Süß from Düsseldorf. Yet Butterfly was not only present on the pedestal by Timo Boll: further on Croatia's WCC-third Tamara Boros and Dutch Trinko Keen entered the semi-final in the singles. The same result was played by Olympic bronze medallists Michael Maze and Finn Tugwell, by the defence duo Viktoria Pavlovitch and Tatyana Kostromina (Belarus) and by the Hungarians Georgina Pota.

Usually rather modest and reserved Boll had much reason for enthusiasm after the 4:2 victory in the final against China's World Team Champion Liu Guozheng, against whom he has already been behind 0:2. „After I had found my rhythm after the third game I played myself free, almost into a flow. I almost forgot that I can play that well. This was perfect Table Tennis, like a dream. I made every ball.“

What was truly impressive of Timo Boll's success was the way, in which the 23-year old presented himself to

Schedule

25. to 28. November

Pro Tour: St. Petersburg Open (RUS)

28. of November to 5. December
World Junior Championships,
Kobe (JPN)

10. to 12. Dezember
Pro Tour: Volkswagen Pro Tour final,
Peking (CHN)

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his opponents. The spectators celebrated the exceptional talent for a firework of world class strokes, which was performed in the six games of the final, with „la Ola“ waves. Yet one round before the European Champion of 2002 had won a match of special personal importance. Thanks to a performance with hardly any mistakes in the semi-final he took a 4:1 revenge for his early out at the WCC 2003 in Paris, where he had lost against an unknown Chinese named Qiu Yike. „Qiu is a strong Chinese player. And I still had an open bill. Loosing to him at the WCC was the most bitter defeat I had suffered in my career so far, for I had travelled to Paris with high expectations. Therefore I was very happy about my victory today.“

Boll's victories against the Chinese were just in time, for many critics had started to fire on him for his actually well performed World Cup tournament end of October, where he still had lost the fifth game to Ma Lin by 0:11. In Leipzig Boll gave the right answer at the table. Boll is back, was the message out of the Arena Leipzig to the media and to China, which by the live tv-coverage became eye-witness of the fact, that once in a while Chinese players too can be given lectures, when they meet an outstanding opponent that day. For almost 15 months the former leader of the World's Ranking list was only able to train with limitations, sometimes even to play only with medications due to his back problems. But after his treatment by the Munich sports physician Dr. Müller-Wohlgefahr after the Olympic Games Boll is without any pains or maladies. „At the moment no training session is skipped and we can work systematically. Winning in Warsaw and Leipzig proves that I still have to be accounted for. I'm on the right way.“

A clear signal was as well sent out by the new double Boll/Süß formed in September after Athens. Twice Gold (Leipzig, Warsaw) and once Silver in only

four Pro-Tour tournaments is an event, which breaks a visible gap into the phalanx of Asian combinations. And the opponents in Leipzig have been first class. The German double won the final against no other than the Olympic second of Athens, Ko Lai Chak and Li Ching (Hongkong) and in the semi-final against Denmark's Bronze-winner Michael Maze / Finn Tugwell. Regarding Maze: The Danish-Open and Europe-Top-12 winner, who carries out his success with the Butterfly on his breast and Tamasu-rubbers on his blades as well, lost tightly to Trinko Keen in the quarter-final.



Reached thr semi-final: Tamara Boros



Successful double:
Timo Boll with Christian Süß

Butterfly star Timo Boll: I've played like Ma Lin at the world cup

Timo Boll, after a short weak period you won the titles at the German Open in Leipzig as well as at the Polish Open last October in the singles and in the doubles, too. How do you explain such different results?

Actually I was in a good shape at the World Cup. What looked drastic was the 0:11 in the quarter final against Ma Lin. But he has played such good Table Tennis, like none of the players present in China had ever seen before. I repeat myself: Ma did not want to beat me 11:0, but even his attempt to make a false serve ended up on the table.

Therefore you were able to present your good shape in Leipzig in an impressive manner...

Yes, and I'm very happy about it; that I had been able to play a good and successful tournament in front of home audience.

You had wanted to win a medal and travelled home with Gold. How do you evaluate the success of Leipzig?

Quite high. The expectations are high at such a great tournament in the home country, especially because I did not win any medal at the German Open so far. 2002 in the quarter final it had been okay, but last year I had dropped out early because of my virus infection. Then one has quite high pressure from outside and can feel it, and of course you yourself build up pressure as well.

How did you deal with this enormous pressure?

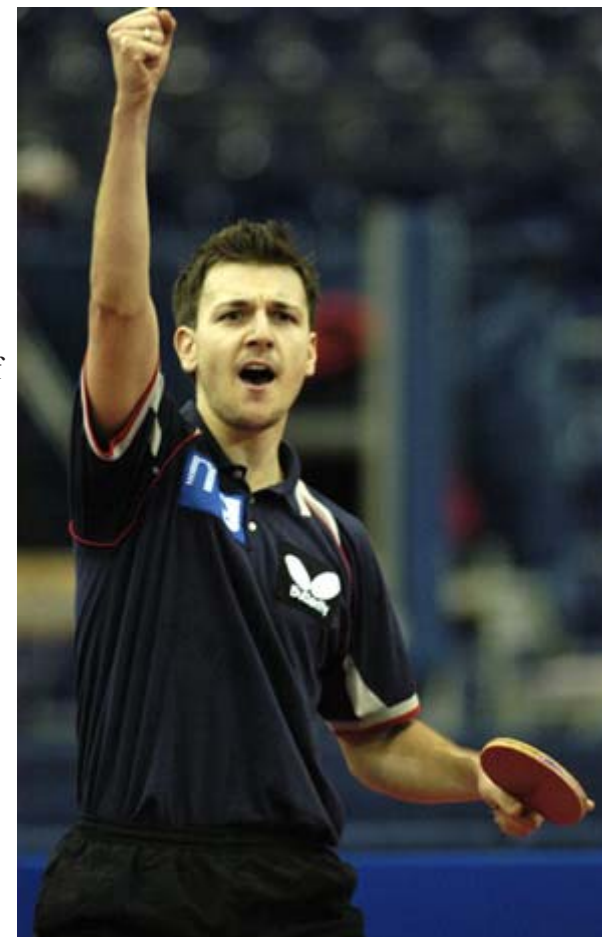
I tried to loosen up and to build up from match to match. This was successful, and especially the semi final against Qiu Yike and the final against Liu Guozheng was top!

Because of beating the Chinese, after you hadn't been successful recently, or because of your performance?

Of course, winning the final was even nicer because I had never beaten Liu before and he is one of the stronger and rather uncomfortable Chinese. But at a certain point in the final I made every ball. The players call it a flow.

What is this in detail?

One makes balls that are actually impossible. This has not been 100%, rather 120%. Suddenly it's like a flush or a dream. I have played just like Ma Lin did against me at the World Cup.



The fans have already celebrated you in the semi final against Qui Yike. Did this match only seem like a revenge for your out in the second round as former World's No.1 at the singles at the WCC in Paris 2003? Or was it important for you to make up for it?

Clearly: this was an important match for me. Of course I wanted revenge for Paris. This had been the most bitter defeat of my career so far. Therefore I have been very hot, maybe over-motivated at the beginning of the match. But then I built up more confidence in my strokes and risked more. And at a certain point it was no risk anymore, for I realized that my strokes simply came and I had reached the same level as I used to have.

So the old Timo Boll?

The level on which I play now is quite high. I will have to try and keep it up. Not only for one tournament, but for the period of a complete season and the of course at important tournaments.

But for this your back, which has again and again been your major problem in the recent two years, has to be reliable....

That's true. It had been for almost one year that I couldn't walk or even sleep properly, for I had suffered pains as of a knife at almost every movement. Because of this I couldn't train properly. The limitation had been very great. I've tried everything except to visit specialist Hans-Wilhelm Müller-Wohlfahrt. Finally I did this after the Olympic Games in Athens and now it's gone. I'm really constantly without pain or problems.

How do you want to stabilize your level now?

The day after the German Open I started my special physical program to become top-fit again and do not have any disadvantages to the other players anymore. Two years ago where I had been constantly successful I was as fit as the Chinese - and beat them all.

It seems that things go well for you at the moment. Only a decision about your future still stands out. Recently you hinted that you could imagine to leave you home club TTV RE-BAU Gönnern at the end of the season. You even talked about leaving Germany. What the newest state?

First I had focused on the tournaments and the sport, for the success as at the German Open had not been possible other way. In general I have many options; recently there even was a request of Kong Linghui's club in the Chinese Super-League. I could play in Japan in the Super-Circuit as well. But going abroad would be second best, only, if there's no proper option in Germany.

Is there a tendency?

I'm excited myself at the moment, but it looks like there will be a good solution for me in Germany.

When do you expect a decision?

Until the end of the year.

Timo Boll, thank you for the interview.

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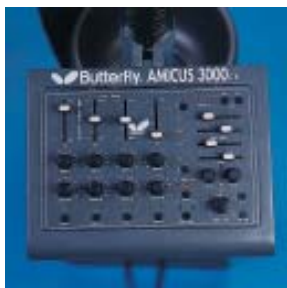
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In the new expert talk provided by Butterfly exclusively for it's Newsletter-subscribers we will discuss many different issues with Mario Amizic: Training and competition, development and culture of playing, tactics and psychology, technique and fitness. Of course we would appreciate your questions to Mario. Mail them to us under the label "Mario Amizic". We will then try to consider your questions in one of the upcoming talks.

To believe in oneself and to assert one's play.....

What about the famous fist or the „Tschoo“-yell in Table Tennis. Is this necessary and if yes, when and how often?

There are many players that do this spontaneously. Others need it. And in some situations the fist is vitally important. We once played in Charleroi in the Europe's Cup with Düsseldorf in front of 6.000 spectators. If you don't fight the noise by showing the fist and yelling, you don't have a chance. Players that don't tend to show the fist yet have learned to use it. One can clearly note that the more important the match gets, fist and Tschoo increase by players, that normally hardly ever use it. On the other hand can an extensive use of fist and Tschoo be a sign of weakness. Players try to overact their own insecurity and nervousness. This can sometimes fall back on oneself.

You said that some players need the fist. What type of player is this?

Players, that are accounted for more as „workers“, which have to run a lot and fight continuously, that have to plague themselves and are no technical aesthetes. They tend to show the fist and push themselves more frequently. Yet – this I want to emphasize – there is no general rule. In some situations it's needed, in others it's not at all. By the fist a player can put pressure on his opponent, but in other situations he makes him stronger by this, stimulates him.

So for a coach it is very difficult to advise a player in these terms.

Of course, how often do you hear coaches tell their players: „Show him the fist!“. But to say this you have to know the player very well. And even then its sometimes wrong.

Let's talk about a different issue frequently misinterpreted by players and coaches: the „starting fewer“ before a match. It's a state somewhere between tenseness and concentration, optimism and nervousness and joy and fear about the match. Famous actors tell, that even after 50 years in business they still have this starting fewer before each act and that they have to have it. How much starting fewer is allowed and makes sense?

I think this has a lot to do with experience. The more important the match gets, the more starting fewer there will be – even by top players. An extreme example: if a player has played in the Bundesliga for years, won some German titles and suddenly finds himself in the semi-final of a World Championship, then his starting fewer will be far greater than at a Bundesliga match. Yet a player that has made several matches at this level will have a different kind of starting fewer, for he has experienced this situation before. With other words – the higher you get, the more you develop methods to deal with nervousness and pressure before the match.

You are talking about pressure a player has. Do professionals not have a permanent and enormous pressure?

Of course, but that pressure is normal for them. They can deal with it. If they couldn't, they would not be able to stay on that level. And each player has his system of dealing with it. To realize this and consider it, is the art of the coach. He has to try and take pressure from the player, so that he's not too tight before the matches, but yet again give him so much pressure, that he's hot in competition. This needs much feeling.

What can a coach do, so that a player does not get an „iron“ or „ironarm“?

This is hard to answer. Some players you can't help at all, others you can kick in the butt, provoke them. Important in any case is one thing: movement! Players, that become tense and nervous freeze most of the times. They don't move between the rallies.

You mean the slight dancing before service or return?

Exactly – this can help to loosen the tightness and to find the rhythm of movement. One who does not move will have heavier and heavier legs and won't find into his match.

Is it possible to simulate the pressure of the match in training? Some books about psychological training offer such tricks.

The pressure, which is in the real competition, can never be caused artificially. What one can do in training is to set up similar conditions, so that the player is prepared. This can be the system of playing of the opponent or the material, tested in the training. It can be the equipment – tables, balls etc. – as well as the time of the match. One can do video analysis. Yet this has some danger in it as well. A player has prepared very precisely for an opponent by video or simulation of strokes and suddenly the opponent makes totally different services. Therefore it's far more important to count on your own strength, to believe in oneself and to assert one's play.

Is there a player for you who can be set up as a role model in terms of psycho-tactics?

Yes, I think Michael Appelgren und Jörg Rosskopf have been and still are ideal in this regards. At the young generation of players I don't see any player yet, who sticks out in these terms. Maybe they still need two or three years.

Thank you very much, Mr.Amizic.

ITTF World ' s Ranking lists, men (11/2004)

1	WANG Liqin CHN	16	LIU Guozheng CHN
2	WANG Hao CHN	17	CHEN Weixing AUT
3	MA Lin CHN	18	HAO Shuai CHN
4	RYU Seung Min KOR	19	KARLSSON Peter SWE
5	Chen Qi CHN	20	LEUNG Chu Yan HKG
6	CHUAN Chih-Yuan TPE	21	SMIRNOV Alexei RUS
7	SCHLAGER Werner AUT	22	PRIMORAC Zoran CRO
8	SAMSONOV Vladimir BLR	23	OH Sang Eun KOR
9	BOLL Timo GER	24	SAIVE Jean-Michel BEL
10	KONG Linghui CHN	25	CRISAN Adrian ROU
11	KREANGA Kalinikos GRE	26	PERSSON Jorgen SWE
12	CHIANG Peng-Lung TPE	27	KO Lai Chak HKG
13	MAZE Michael DEN	28	BLASZCZYK Lucjan POL
14	JOO Se Hyuk KOR	29	ROSSKOPF Jörg GER
15	WALDNER Jan-Ove SWE	30	KORBEL Petr CZE

ITTF World ' s Ranking lists, women (11/2004)

1	ZHANG Yining CHN	16	CAO Zhen CHN
2	WANG Nan CHN	17	LI Xiaoxia CHN
3	NIU Jianfeng CHN	18	LI Nan CHN
4	GUO Yan CHN	19	TOTH Krisztina HUN
5	KIM Kyung Ah KOR	20	PAVLOVICH Viktoria BLR
6	GUO Yue CHN	21	FUKUHARA Ai JPN
7	BOROS Tamara HRV	22	LIN Ling HKG
8	LI Jia Wei SIN	23	KIM Hyang Mi PRK
9	TIE Yana HKG	24	STEFF Mihaela ROU
10	LAU Sui Fei HKG	25	SONG Ah Sim HKG
11	LI Ju CHN	26	JIANG Huajun CHN
12	LIU Jia AUT	27	ZHANG Rui HKG
13	GAO Jun USA	28	LEE Eun Sil KOR
14	UMEMURA Aya JPN	29	KIM Hyon Hui PRK
15	FAN Ying CHN	30	BAI Yang CHN

(Butterfly-players are marked!)

Dear Table Tennis friends,

In cooperation with the Federation of German Table Tennis Coaches (VDTT) Butterfly presents to you practical exercises for your play. Enjoy them!

Part 4 – The length

To give the desired length to the service is an important parameter in the singles and even more in the doubles. The most easiest way to control the length of your service is by the first bounce on the own part of the table. The rules are:

- the closer the first bounce is at your own baseline, the longer the service will become
- the closer the first bounce is to the net, the shorter the service will become

With this rule in our mind we begin to train. For this exercise we need a skipping-rope, which is placed over the middle of our own half of the table. Then we start placing our service as follows:

- first only between net and rope = short service
- next only between rope and baseline = long service
- then three services short, one fast and long

This scheme is a help for returning as well, for the length of the service can be predicted when it hits the table for the first time. Yet: at a certain level this rule is limited. Good service players will be able to place the ball close to the baseline and yet make a short service. But if the match enters a critical phase and the service has to be short for sure most of them consider this scheme as well.

The next time we will learn to make best use of the long service.



www.vdtt.de