

Butterfly® February 2005

NEWS

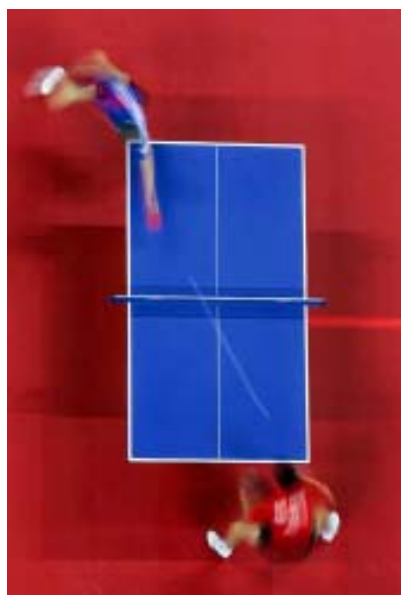
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The World Press Photo Award was handed out in several categories this year and is considered the highest decoration in press photography. The World Press Photo Award is the most reputable and desired award in the photo-journalism. As in the year before the category news-photos was dominated by pictures of the Iraq, but as well many pictures of the Tsunami-catastrophe at the Indian Ocean or the taking of hostages at a school in the Russian city of Beslan.

SPIEGEL ONLINE

Second Price Sports Action Stories:

**Donald Miralle Jr., Getty Images
(was at the Olympic Games)**



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Butterfly on the pedestal three times: First major title for Liu Jia

For Liu Jia the Europe Top 12 ended at the 6th of February with her first major title. In total the athletes with the Butterfly on their chest climbed the pedestal three times: Gold for the Austrian Liu Jia, Silver for the Hungarian Krisztina Toth and Bronze for Germany's exceptional Timo Boll was the proud loot of the Butterfly contract players at the European ranking tournament in Rennes.

It's an undoubted fact: The winners of Europe Top 12 2005 can be accounted to the circle of candidates for a medal, but top in the bookmaker's ranking were neither the Russian Alexei Smirnov nor Liu Jia, who both won the title at the second most important continental event for the first time. At least Liu Jia was seen as the most serious challenger for World's No. 4 Tamara Boros from Croatia prior to the two-day event in the Bretagne. Yet more than others the lefthander from Austria believed in herself. Named „Susi“ by her friends it was this self-confidence, which was the greatest key to

Europe Top 12 Rennes (5./6. Februar 2005)



**Butterfly-medal winners at the Europe
Top 12 2005 in Rennes:**

Gold: Liu Jia (Austria)
Silver: Krisztina Toth (Hungary)
Bronze: Timo Boll (Germany)

Schedule

21th to 25th February
Pro-Tourtournament in Middle East

27th of March to 3th of April
**European Championships Men and
Women, Aarhus (DEN)**

30th of April to 6th of May
**Volkswagen World Championships in
the singles, Shanghai (CHN)**

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success: „In the recent year I have not only improved in play, but mentally as well and I believe in myself much more than I used to. I travelled to Rennes to win the tournament. With a second rank I would not have been happy.“

With this attitude last year's third, who has the most athletic play of all European women together with Boros, stayed without a defeat throughout the tournament as the only one of all male and female starters. World's No. 10 beat ECC-second Wenling Tan-Monfardini (Italy), Tamasu colleague Nicole Struse (Germany), Otilia Badescu (Rumania), Mihaela Steff (Rumania) and in the final of two Butterflies the Hungarian Krisztina Toth, who has to wait for her first continental singles title once again.

Timo Boll, Werner Schlager and Michael Maze – these three Butterfly-stars were declared favourites in advance besides European Champion Vladimir Samsonov. With Alexei Smirnov, who has entered the field of twelve because Tamasu partner Kalinikos Kreanga withdrew, at the end the most constant player of the two days of Rennes won. The superiority of the little spectacular, yet effective and safe play of the Russian had to be accepted by defending champion Michael Maze (Denmark) and in the semi-final by Germany's winner of 2002 and 2003, Timo Boll. In January still injured and behind in terms of training, therefore not well prepared for the tournament, Boll was pleased with his third rank. „I wasn't prepared and that's why I'm confident with the result. I'm on the right way to get a proper form for ECC and WCC“. World Champion

Werner Schlager did not win a game in the group match against Czech Butterfly Petr Korbel nor in the quarter final against Samsonov. Yet Schlager's preparations as well are fixed on the ECC and WCC: „These are the two highlights of the season“.

Especially the European Championships in Aarhus are the declared goal of Danish Michael Maze, who suffered a setback on his path to the continental title and had to travel home after two matches without success. Yet the Düsseldorf-player was unlucky to meet the later finalists Smirnov and Samsonov in the strongest group.

The second important tournament of the continent offered high-class thrilling sports with two winners, who showed the best form amongst the top-athletes. Especially the success of Liu Jia raises the hope, that another European besides Tamara Boros will be able to seriously endanger China's top-players at the World Championships. The will is there: „I'm lacking a little time and experience. But I want to improve and attack the best Asians“.

„I have become more mature in my mind“

Liu Jia, congratulations for your success at the Europe Top-12 from Butterfly News, as well. What meaning does this success of Rennes have for you?

Of course I'm glad and happy about it. This was my first victory at a major tournament and so means much to me. The success at the Europe Top-12 gives me more motivation and self-confidence for the ECC as well. Of course I want to offer a good performance in Aarhus, too.

Your rise to the top up to position 10 of the World's Ranking List during the recent months and the triumph in Rennes was hard not to notice. What's the difference of the former Liu Jia and today's?

I have worked constantly and improved in all areas. Especially I tried to become stronger in mental terms. I have become more mature in my mind. In addition there were some important victories, that gave me more self-confidence and motivation.

Your success was predicted for quite a while, or at least believed in. As a player of the Top-10 and winner of the Europe Top-12 yet in the future success is expected, which means more pressure. How do you deal with this?

I can deal with pressure quite well, but I need the pressure, too. Yet I don't put pressure on myself so that I become too tense, that's important. Usually I can turn pressure into motivation and that's why I'm not worried by expectations by others.

Success like your triumph in Rennes are good means to make sports like Table Tennis more popular in the own country. Can your victory at the Europe-Top-12 give women Table Tennis in Austria a boost?

Winning in Rennes will not be good enough for our Women Table Tennis. Even after Werner Schlager won the WCC title in 2003 the great interest only lasted a short while. And in Austria it's difficult for Women, for we actually only have four players. We do not have enough manpower to work with youngsters and therefore we have far to few youngsters. To gain more meaning we simply need more personal.

You have described the difficult situation in Austria, and due to your performance your name is mentioned by rumours as support for several European top-clubs ahead of each season. Is an engagement at any other club than the ASKÖ Erdgas Froschberg Linz an issue for you?

That's true, I have many top offers. The German Bundesliga has a high level and is interesting for me. But Linz is like a family, like home; this was, why I went to Linz straight away. I don't want to leave Linz behind and hurt anyone. That's why it would be difficult for me to leave Linz. Friendships mean more to me than money. I think I will play for Linz as long as my manager is at the club.



Linz is your home, China your origin. Are the upcoming World Championships in Shanghai something special for you?

No, I don't care. I have played several tournaments in China. The Olympic Games 2008 in my city of birth, Beijing, could become something special. Shanghai is only a city, where the WCC are held. Yet my parents will come and visit me there, but besides the WCC could be held in Germany or any other country.

China provides those players in the World's Top, which you aim to attack next. How do you want to close up to them?

I have to stay stable in my mind and believe in being able to beat them. Formerly I haven't, but recently I have realized, that we all are close together and I don't play worse. That's why I have to become stronger in my mind. I watch many videos of them as well, to improve my tactics and technique against the Chinese.

Let's get back to the next goal European Championships. In Rennes you have talked frankly about aiming for the title. Don't you fear the competitors?

The first ten in Europe are very close together, of course, and any player can be dangerous. Therefore I would be happy with a medal, but for years I've been dreaming about the ECC title. In Aarhus I can make it!

Liu Jia, thank you for this talk.

Successful Butterfly-Team

Portugal is not one of the great Table Tennis nations. Yet one team is one of the best: Clube D.S. Roque, Madeira. The Portuguese have already been able to bring many titles: Winner of the Portuguese Super Cup 1998/99, National Team Champion 2000/2001, four-times winner of the National Cup 1007/98, 1999/2000, 2000/01, 2001/02.

The Team:

Marcelo Gouveia (President)/Tan Linan/João Monteiro / nuno Henriques / Marcos Freitas / Ricardo Faria (Coach)



ITTF World 's Ranking lists, men (02/2005)

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

ITTF World 's Ranking lists, women (02/2005)

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

(Butterfly-players are marked!)

Shibutani in the Tamasu Coachingstaff

Tamasu Co. Ltd. goes for competence in the choice of it's coaching staff. Japan's former World class player and single's champion Hiroshi Shibutani belongs to the coaches of the Tokyo Butterfly headquarter since the beginning of February. The WCC Bronze medallist of 1997 works together with names like Shigeo Ito (former World's Singles Champion) and Kiyonobu Iwasaki. Shibutani has ended his active career last January at the Japanese Championships. Already several years before he had left the international stage. Shibutani's last notation at the World's Ranking list was position 93. in October 2001.



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 7 – Variations

After we have trained all sorts of different services and the crucial adjectives, we now have to learn to use them variably. If a player has difficulties with a service for technical (or mental) reasons and is unable to play a better return, there is no sense in playing variations all the time. And it can be, that a certain kind of services brings you into the game in a better way. Even here variations for the sake of variations don't make sense.

But in the most cases – especially at higher level – the opponent's returns are so good, that the service play has to be changed constantly to cause problems in reading and therefore returning the service. Generally three things can be adapted at a service: the speed, the placing and the rotation. Regarding the trajectory of the ball one can say, that it has to be held low all the time. Especially the rotation has a special meaning at the service. In the following exercise there's a gymnastic-ring in the middle of the opponent's side of the table. The practicing player has to play different services with different rotation and speed all the time, and place them at different positions outside of the ring. Hitting inside the ring is forbidden. To fulfil this task the service player has to adapt and change his movement and the use of the wrist constantly – be variable as desired!

The next time we try to control the state before we serve and train to get from service to open game.



www.vdtt.de

„Mario´s Children“ - Japan´s talent project in Düsseldorf Today: Ryusuke Sakamoto

The senior in the „Boy group“



In the training group of Butterfly sports director Mario Amizic Ryusuke Sakamoto not only sticks out by his extravagant haircut. The lefthander with his 20 years of age is the senior amongst the group of Japan's hopes. His face not only shows his higher age compared to his teenager-colleagues

in the „Boy Group“, but shows a certain experience in competition and training.

Behind „Saka“ there lay hard months. In Düsseldorf's Bundesliga team he had to pay a bitter fee in his premiere season as No. 5, after he transferred from second-league team Schwalbe Bergneustadt. Yet Düsseldorf's coach Andreas Preuß is so convinced of Sakamoto's capabilities that the contract was extended to 2006 by the former European Cup winner.

„It's very good for my personal development to play in the Bundesliga. If I win or loose is not primarily of importance, though I like to contribute to the team's success“, Sakamoto states.

To cause this desired effect, the young man from Okazaki City, Amizic and Preuß work on his weaknesses day after day and point their finger at problems. „He has an incredibly fast hand, but „Saka“ will have to improve a lot in his passive play. Besides he seems to lack some tactical basics“, Preuß analyses. The former professional shows understanding for Sakamoto as well, „who reminds me of the young Jörg Roskopf“. Preuß: „Maybe he builds up much pressure, maybe it's a language problem.“

No problem at all does Sakamoto have in the doubles. Preuß says, that „there Sakamoto is world class and even better than our top player and Olympic bronze medallist in the doubles, Michael Maze.“ In fact the winner of several U21 tournaments of the ProTour and Christian Süß, in Germany partner of former World's No.1 Timo Boll, form one of the best doubles in the Bundesliga. Hardly any double was able to beat them so far.

Ambition and especially durability should free Sakamoto's potential in the singles as well. „The potential is there without doubt, even though he might play quite rough sometimes and with too much risk.

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Several days ago „Saka“ has qualified for the singles WCC 2005 in Shanghai in an impressive manner. At the Japanese Qualification tournament, where only the winner of 14 participants qualifies, he succeeded with only a defeat in the pre-rounds.

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York

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material „cotton feeling“
60% cotton
40% polyester
colour blue/red/yellow
red/black/yellow
marine-blue/gray/blue



Basic

size s - xxl
material 100% cotton
colour black



Classic

size xxs - xxxl
material micro-fibre
100% polyester
colour marine-blue, light blue



GJP Sweatshirt

size s - xxxl
material 80% cotton
20% polyester
colour grey-melange



York

size xxs - xxxl
material micropeach
100% polyester
colour blue, black, white



In the new expert talk provided by Butterfly exclusively for its 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.

In today's interview Butterfly sports director Mario Amizic talks about the current state of the International Table Tennis. He highlights new developments in organisational terms and takes position towards the momentary culture of play.

Table Tennis has become greater and more complicated on international level

Mr. Amizic, today the Table Tennis top sport should be in the centre of our conversation. Letting the last 10 years pass by one can note some significant changes in this section. What are the new developments and tendencies in the top section in your opinion?

By my work as the Butterfly sports director on the one side and as the coach of young Japanese Table Tennis talents hired by the Japanese Table Tennis Federation on the other side, I travel a lot internationally. And I have to say: Table Tennis has become incredibly great. On almost every weekend there are interesting tournaments. The ITTF Pro Tour nowadays includes 16 tournaments. And in the junior section there is a real boom after the establishment of the World Junior Championships and the first World Junior Circuit tournaments. There were seven of such tournaments in the first year, now there are twelve. The tournaments are well visited and draw more and more attention. Even wide distances seem no difficulty for players and federations.

You said, Table Tennis became great. Do you consider this as a positive development?

Of course this is positive. It's simply fun to travel to a well visited tournament of a good standard. Yet there's one disadvantage. Young players who want to get to the top in medium or long range have to face enormous stress due to much travelling. Considering their schedule they are little managers. In terms of time it becomes more and more tight, and in terms of sports harder and harder. This goes even more for players, which are already at the top and want to stay there. A player at position No. 10 of the world can't simply say, he won't play the next three ProTour tournaments. The competition is getting higher and higher. This demands excellent management by the players, a perfect athletics and a very well dosed training. In total it has become much more complicated and difficult nowadays.

The ITTF has set up the World Junior Circuit and the World Junior Championships, to promote Table Tennis throughout the World and to give new development impulses for countries, which have played a little, sometimes even a minimal role. Did this succeed?

Yes, much has changed. Even in the so called exotic countries good Table Tennis is played. The exchange of experience at tournaments has helped. And today there are very good coaches in these countries as well. And the international training camps did their thing. Globally seen this is very positive. Top Table Tennis has grown internationally, but again has become more complicated.

How has the play developed in terms of technique and tactics. Did the level of play increase?

The level did increase, but the play has hardly changed within the recent years. This in spite of the changes in regulations. The larger ball did not slow down the game. And the services are still very dangerous. One change is, that the game has become more aggressive. One cause is the improvement in terms of materials. The Table Tennis industry has not slept in terms of blades and rubbers considering the larger balls. Rubbers and blades have become faster and harder. The good players at senior and junior age play more risky, yet – this I want to emphasize – on a controlled base.

You say „risky, yet on a controlled base“. Is this not a contradiction?

No, by this I want to say, that they play very aggressive and fast, but with much safety. For this they have to train very much. To be able to cope with such high speed one has to spend much time in the training hall. Today's top players play fast, but safe. They are no kamikaze-players, that just go for it.

Does this aggressive play has to do with the larger ball, which takes in less rotation?

No, I believe it's more a matter of athletics of the player. One has to be extremely fast!

Has the top Table Tennis become more attractive considering the increased speed and aggressiveness? Some experts claim this clearly.

This is no question. Today's top Table Tennis is very attractive, if two players of the same level meet. But this has always been like that. Matches with differences in level can hardly be attractive. And by changes in rules one can't make the game more attractive at once. Some seriously claim that the service would be less dangerous and the game more attractive if only allowed with backhand. I say the opposite: first the top players would get used to it very quickly and second the phase of service could become very monotonous.

Talking about service; didn't the game change in terms of rhythm and variations due to the playing to eleven?

A difficult question. The game itself has become faster and more aggressive. And the sequence of games has become a lot faster by the change of counting. I say, 0:0 is like 19:19 in the past. The service has much more meaning, especially in mental terms. Therefore it's very important to have a large repertoire of services to constantly put the opponent under pressure.

This interview will be continued in the next issue of Butterfly news.