

# International Table Tennis Committee



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## Trip Reports for China 01-2002 for ITTC

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### I. Introduction

USA Table Tennis went January 8 with a group of six people to China on a week-long trip. USATT President Sheri Pittman lead the group, who is also ITTF Continental Vice President representing North America as one of the 12 member ITTF board of directors. Aly Salam went as the ITTF Officials committee Umpires secretary, and was there for meetings with ITTF and an Umpire seminar for the Chinese Table Tennis Association. Pam Gerig is the Executive Director for the Palm Beach County Sport Commission in Florida. One of the top 3 Sports commissions in the USA and very supportive of Table Tennis in general. Another impressive person that attended this USATT group was Sheila Walker. She is a Sporting event consultant, and she was in charge of the US Olympic Sport Festivals for 10 years. After that, she was USOC Director of Sport services, where she supervised seven areas, among them USOC Coaching. She and Sheri are putting together a Table Tennis project that hopefully will bear fruit in the near future. Myself I went to represent both the International Table Tennis Committee for the disabled (ITTC) and Texas Wesleyan University (TWU). Sheri Pittman invited me on this trip to initiate contacts with ITTF and the China Table Tennis Association, on how they can help USA in getting our College league into a higher level. This was combined with meetings with ITTF on behalf of ITTC. The goal is to recruit good players to come to school as students in USA and play for the schools. In addition, to create more schools with a similar approach to Table Tennis as Texas Wesleyan University. TWU recruited one good Chinese player (pending all VISA arrangements), that will be ready to play in the fall, who was an ex 11 year provincial team player that now is an English major.

### II. Meeting details

#### a) ITTF – ITTC relations

Christian Lillieroos (ITTC Chairman) had a meeting with Adham Sharara (ITTF President) and Jordi Serra (ITTF Executive Director) to investigate the areas of possible co-operation in-between ITTF and ITTC. The International Paralympic Committee recognizes the International Table Tennis Committee for the disabled (ITTC) as the governing body for all Paralympic Table Tennis involving athletes with a disability. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognizes the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), as the governing body for all Table Tennis involved with able-bodied athletes in the world. In

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2001, IOC and IPC signed an agreement after more than 12 years of co-operation, that formalized the relationship in-between IOC and IPC when it comes to the Olympic and Paralympic games. Starting with the 2008 Olympic/Paralympic Games the Host City is under equal obligation to host both games. Before it was a separate contract negotiated with the Host City for the Olympic games and the Paralympic games. The Paralympic Games started 1960 and since 1988 in Seoul, it has been in the same city as the Olympic games. PASO the Pan America Sport Association which organizes the Pan American Games every 4 years has signed an agreement with APC the Americas Paralympic Committee in April 2001. This means the Host City also is under obligation to host the Para Pan American Games two weeks after the Pan Am Games. The Commonwealth Games in Manchester 2002 are already having eight disabled events included in the regular program. The All Africa Games, included as early as in 1999 four sports in their regular program, and are planning to expand the involvement of Paralympic events in the 2003 Games. In addition to this, some tournaments like US Open have both Paralympic Table Tennis events and regular ITTF Pro Tour events in the same hall. At this moment no formal relationship exist in-between ITTC and ITTF and in light of all the International integration efforts that is going on, this dialogue has to start. Both the ITTC Chairman and the ITTF President agreed in principle that co-operation in-between both the governing bodies would be positive.

1. The first area where a co-operation seemed reasonable was for the rules. ITTC has a special service rule for wheelchair play, where the serve can not go off the sideline on the table nor can it be short and travel backwards. In wheelchair doubles, the players do not alternate but they play like in tennis. The ITTC Chairman suggested that these rules were included as ITTF rules. The ITTF President agreed in principle that it seemed like a good idea. The addition of space to the rules handbook would be approximately 1.5 pages. The suggestion was to contact the ITTF rules chairman and let it go the regular course of action. The training of official has been a concern in the past, currently both the secretaries in the ITTF official committee for referees and umpires are both very experienced people within ITTC. Aksel Beckmann, ITTF referee secretary, was the ITTC Technical Official from 1996 - 2001, and designed the ITTC Umpire certification system. Aly Salam, ITTF Umpire secretary, was the deputy referee in the Sydney Paralympic Games, and has conducted several Umpire training courses for ITTC. Because of this, if ITTF decided to adopt the ITTC rules the training of official will not be difficult to implement for the current people in charge.
2. The second issue was development, where the ITTF Development Program Manager of ITTF Glenn Tepper was approached. An ITTF coaching certification program is currently under development, and he together with the ITTF President both said it would be easy to include a section about how to coach Paralympic Table Tennis athletes, in that handbook.
3. The third issue was communication. The ITTF Illustrated is a very good way to communicate Paralympic issues to the World Table Tennis population. The ITTC Chairman asked if it would be possible to publish Paralympic Table Tennis articles there. The ITTF President had no objection to that and referred to Ian Marshall, the editor, as the one that had to coordinate the work with us.

#### **4) Meeting with Chinese Paralympic Committee and International Table Tennis Committee for the disabled**

In Beijing, Christian and Rong Lillieroos attended a meeting Luncheon with the Chinese Paralympic Committee. The people from China that attended the meeting was: The Vice President of China Disabled Persons federation, Vice President of China Paralympic

Committee (CPC), Secretary General of CPC, Executive Director of International relations of CPC, and two Executive secretaries of CPC. The issues that were discussed was:

- a) General development of Paralympic table tennis and coaches in China
- b) How Paralympic Table Tennis players from China could best obtain ranking points and qualify for the major ITTC events
- c) Olympic/Paralympic Games 2008 and the situation for Table Tennis.

Rong Lillieroos was nominated as the Honorary National Table Tennis adviser to the CPC. She has an exceptional experience of Coaching Paralympic Table Tennis athletes from being the coach for USA's National Paralympic team for over 10 years. CPC suggested Rong to evaluate the development of Paralympic Table Tennis in China at training camps and in seminars. Christian Lillieroos have to go to China in the short future for the 2008 Games meetings, and could also perform the ITTC Coaching certification courses at the same time. Christian Lillieroos also agreed to help CPC in the overall development of all sports in China leading up to the 2008 Games. His experience, not only as Chairman of ITTC, but also as the previous Americas Paralympic Committee Technical Officer, and the IPC Director of Sport, would be helpful to CPC.

#### IV. Summary and conclusion:

The trip was very successful. I express a sincere gratitude to Sheri Pittman for taking the time to invite and give me the opportunity to attend this very important trip. Many good contacts was developed for USATT, ITTC and the Texas Wesleyan University. One thing was made even clearer after this trip; the overall development of Table Tennis in USA is of International concern. If we start with development of Collegiate Table Tennis, that will motivate parents and juniors to start to play. They could later get a scholarship and an education with the help of Table Tennis. We could have 100 programs in the future that provide table tennis scholarships. The college league could later lead to Professional leagues, but the players that do not make it can always fall back on a college education. The whole world will benefit if we can make table tennis successful in the USA.

DATE: February 8, 2002

Signature:

Christian Lillieroos