

A Brief Report on the 3rd Far East & South Pacific (FESPIC) Table Tennis Championships held in Osaka, Japan June 29-July 5,2001

Background

European Table Tennis Championships had a longer history even before the establishment of the International Paralympics Committee in 1989. The Championships in the Fesplic region, however became materialized only when the quota system was introduced after the Barcelona Paralympics in 1992 as then players had to have in the high ranking positions to get qualified for Paralympics and the World Championships.

The first Fesplic Table Tennis Championships were organized in 1997 in Hong Kong and followed by the second one in Taipei in 1999. Osaka of Japan then hosted the third Championships between 29 June – 5 July this year.

The Preparations

Being the ITTC Technical Delegate I went to Osaka for a venue inspection in April 2000, and found that all venues were up to the ITTC requirement and moreover, as Osaka was also the host for the World Championships for Able-bodied in the same year I had full confidence that the 3rd Championships were to be a successful one.

Since Japan had prepared to include Interlectually Disabled (ID)players and when they knew that INAS-FID and all the ID athletes were being banned from participating in all IPC sanctioned events as a result of the Sydney incident, they were so disappointed that for quite a while they had thought of canceling the entire Championships. It was after lots of lobbying and explanations that the Osaka organizers decided to put on the show again. As a compromise and in fact to also provide a competition opportunity for ID players, an INAS-FID sanctioned FESPIC Table Tennis Championships were held in conjunction with the IPC/ITTC sanctioned 10 Physically-Disabled-class competition, with however only ID players from Hong Kong and Japan competing.

The Championships

The Championships were held in the beautiful Maishima Arena with a seating capacity of over 7,000 is one of the sports facilities in the Maishima Sports Island, an artificial island built on the reclaimed land. Shuttle buses with wheelchair facilities were provided to take people to and from the accommodation venues, the Amity Maishima and Lodge. Accessibility was never a problem in Japan in all venues.

A total of 107 players from 7 member nations/territories competed in Open, Team and Class events of the Championships, and due to insufficient players in some classes, some of them had to be combined in order to make competitions where players could earn ranking points if winning. This time, we had Thailand entered again while Indonesia and Vietnam did not participate this time. Anyway when compared with the 10 competing nations/territories, These Championships are shrinking and we need to put in more effort to promote this event.

To meet the ITTC requirement of regional Championships seminar on classification, umpire and for the first time in the history of table tennis for the Disabled, a Technical Delegate training/education programme were conducted during the Championships. Full reports on these seminars/training programmes were furnished to the ITTC and also to the IPC Sports Director. Another aspect worthy mentioning is that we initiated the category B umpire system where we qualified a considerable number of non-English speaking ITTF umpires to officiate in regions of their language. Previously ITTC would only qualified ITTF umpires who could speak English. This was not fair to those who come from non-English speaking nations. So, this is a great improvement in the development of table tennis.

It was quite a surprise that during the 5 day competition there were not many spectators. Posters and pamphlets were distributed and posted in public, according to the organizer. The main reason probably being that there were too many major sport events hosted in Osaka in 2001 (Osaka was one of the candidate cities for 2008 Olympic Games) and the Championships might have lost attraction to the Osaka people.

Regional Assembly

As decided in the Sydney General Assembly and endorsed by the IPC, all regional representatives were to be elected, and elected in regional Championships in 2001. Thus the FESPIC regional assembly was held on 30 June, with the ITTC Chairman, Mr. Christian Lillierors presided over. 6 nations attended and 5 of them were with mandatory voting right. The new FESPIC representative Mr. Hong-Jae LEE of Korea was elected for the term 2001-2005. I had been Fesplic representative since 1988 and it is good that someone would take over the responsibility of promoting table tennis in the FESPIC region. My best wishes to him.

Future FESPIC Championships

It is always important that we secure the hosts for the next Championships and in this respect we have been fortunate to have Shanghai of China agreed to host the one in 2003 while Korea and Malaysia had already shown interest to host in 2005.

Silas CHIANG
 Technical Delegate (1st, 2nd & 3rd Championships)
 FESPIC Representative in ITTC (1988-2001)

Encl. Participation in FESPIC Table Tennis Championships

(3 far east tt champ)

1st FESPIC Table Tennis Championships held in Hong Kong in 1997

Nation/Territories	Player		
	Male	Female	Total
Australia	5	0	5
Bangladesh	1	0	1
China	4	4	8
Chinese Taipei	8	4	12
Hong Kong, China	18	8	26
Japan	13	8	21
Korea	18	0	18
Nauru	1	0	1
Sri Lanka	2	0	2
Thailand	7	3	10
10	77	27	104

2nd FESPIC Table Tennis Championships held in Taipei in 1999

Nation/Territories	Player		
	Male	Female	Total
Australia	6	1	7
China	6	5	11
Chinese Taipei	21	9	30
Hong Kong, China	15	7	22
Indonesia	4	0	4
Japan	13	14	27
Korea	20	0	20
Vietnam	4	0	4

8	90	35	125
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3rd FESPIC Table Tennis Championships held in Osaka in 2001

Nation/Territories	Player		
	Male	Female	Total
Australia	3	0	3
China	5	4	9
Chinese Taipei	12	4	16
Hong Kong, China	11	5	16
Japan	22	12	34
Korea	22	1	23
Thailand	4	2	6
7	79	28	107