

President's Year in Review

Welcome to the final edition of Over the Net for 2015, and what an eventful year it has been.

Most recently, we sent a squad of junior players to the Pacific School Games in Adelaide, where table tennis featured as an exhibition sport for the first time, and hopefully will be included as a regular PSG sport from here on. This was an enormous event and our squad of players was part of a 650 strong team across various sports from Queensland alone.

The players had a great time and had the opportunity to play against high standard players from every other state as well as China, Macau, India and Cambodia.

Participation at the games was the culmination of our largest Queensland schools event ever, which included 6 regional events and the first ever state final, before a team was selected to go to the Games. The lead up to the Games also saw the first ever AWD Queensland schools event, one which will be included in future TTQ calendars.

A consequence of this type of development is that table tennis is now being trialled as a

recognised Queensland School Sport. A full report on the PSG is included in this edition of Over the Net.

Our other major undertaking in the latter part of the year was of course the staging of the 2015 San-Ei Australian Veterans Championships in Caloundra. This event was the largest Australian Veterans ever held, attracting a record 479 players from across Australia and abroad (New Zealand, USA, England, Japan, Germany and Slovakia).

Credit for the success of the event must go to the organising committee which included Sunshine Coast Table Tennis Association members, Ken Hay and Paul Green along with Tony Herbert and Jason Walsh. Preparation for this event began over two year ago. Thanks also Lukas Kozak from the Gold Coast, as well as Karen Carruthers and Katie McDonald for their efforts.

Referee Graeme Ireland, Deputy Referees Dave Delpratt, Joe Clifton and Steve Gillespie, and Tournament Controllers Brian and Bev James, all worked tirelessly to bring about an event that was in the words of retiring



Trevor Barrett

Veterans Chairman Ken Cole "the best ever".

The Australian Veterans also welcomed major Sponsors San-Ei and Table Tennis World on board, and TTQ is working to maintain and further develop our relationships with both of these partners for the future.

2015 saw a significant change to the Selection Policy in terms of reverting to the participation in Queensland state level closed events as being mandatory for players to be eligible for selection in Queensland teams. As with any change this was met with complaint from some players, a degree of misinfor-



mation being circulated, and TTQ received a small number of requests for dispensation, each of which was considered on its merits by the Board. Overall however, the feedback to the Board has been that the change has been successful with higher, rather than lower levels of participation occurring in our major events.

By way of further explanation, the aim of the change to the Selection Policy, along with other changes that have occurred and may also occur in the future, is to re-establish our state level closed events as "marquee events" for table tennis in Queensland.

This is a primary goal to which the Board of TTQ is working, and for this to occur we need participation in these events to be viewed by our players at all levels as the pinnacle of state

level participation each year. It is only if all of our best players participate at such events that we can bring back to these events the status that they once held.

Even more importantly, we can only expect major sponsors such as those mentioned above to be attracted to, and supportive of table tennis in this state if we can offer such high standard tournaments for sponsorship.

I urge all players to support these events in future because by doing so you will be assisting with the development of our sport and improving the standard of table tennis across the state.

Further in this regard we were also pleased to welcome in 2015, the Honourable Leanne Donaldson, now Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, as Patron of table tennis in Queensland. Leanne is a former table tennis player herself, who readily accepted the role of Patron, and she has been prominent in her attendance at various events during the year. We thank Leanne for her support of our sport and look forward to her official participation, where-ever her ministerial duties allow, in the coming years.

For the information of players a new Rankings system is currently being trialled, which will hopefully be in place from 2016

to assist our selectors. We have been testing the system against current and historical data.

The new system has been the primary initiative of Board members Danny Lloyd and Steve Mitchell, and I would like to thank them for their considerable efforts so far. The aim of the new system is to put in place a quantifiable and transparent process based on participation in Queensland events to determine the Queensland Rankings in various age groups each year.

It is also intended that the system will be on-line, and that players will be able to view their current ranking throughout any individual year. There will also be a minimum level of participation to be eligible for a Queensland ranking from 2016 onwards, an initiative which is again designed to promote participation in Queensland events by Queensland players.

We are pleased to welcome Patrick Wuertz as our new State Director of Coaching and High Performance, and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the TTQ Board to thank Cathy Townsend for her efforts in this role in recent years. Patrick has a high performance background in table tennis in Germany, and is looking forward to his new role in Queensland. I am sure he is already known to many players across the state.



We also are pleased to welcome our new State Development Officer Greg Fox, who comes to us through funding from Table Tennis Australia, as part of a nationwide initiative to develop table tennis as a sport in the Australian school system. This is a very significant initiative from TTA, focussing on primary school children, and I urge all clubs to support Greg in his role.

Increased participation at school level can only further the development of our sport and we need all clubs to be prepared to be part of this process. More players in your local schools means potentially more members, and all clubs need to be aiming for increasing the numbers of Junior players if our sport is to continue to grow.

Further in relation to staffing, 2015 saw a relationship with James Cook University developed, as Katie MacDonald completed her internship with TTQ this year. Katie got a High distinction for the work placement subject with TTQ, and has since been accepted into the honours program for university.

Our congratulations to Katie, and hopefully we can continue to maintain such partnerships in future years. Katie was highly involved in the running of the Australian Veterans this year.

Further for the notice of our veteran players, 2016 is to see the inclusion of Table Tennis at the Pan Pacific Masters Games for the first time in a number of years. TTQ in conjunction with the Gold Coast club will be running the event in November 2016, so please put that event on your calendar.

In relation to membership, our SportsPass membership benefits scheme will continue in 2016. While the initial take-up was slow, the scheme has been an overall a success in 2015 with TTQ offering our members more than ever before. We encourage all members to support this scheme wherever possible, because the benefits flow directly back to your own club.

I hope you all have enjoyed the change in format and increased frequency of our newsletters. The change from three larger newsletters to 9 smaller more frequent newsletters has hopefully kept you more informed throughout the year and I would

like to thank Jason Walsh for his efforts in this regard.

I also urge all members to notify TTQ of your current email address if you have not already done so, to ensure that you can receive Over the Net and other information from TTQ directly and keep up to date with what is happening in our sport.

If you or your club have any suggestions for the TTQ Board of Management to consider please contact the TTQ office any time.

Finally, I would like to thank all Board members for their considerable efforts this year, and on behalf of the Board of TTQ I would like to thank all members and clubs for your support in 2015.

Best wishes to everyone for a safe and enjoyable holiday period. We look forward to seeing everyone again in 2016.

Trevor Barrett
TTQ President

*All the best
in 2016!*

