

INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS COMMITTEE
FOR THE DISABLED



TECHNICAL DELEGATE

EVALUATION REPORT

Name of Tournament / Championships : US Open 2002

Ranking Factor Applied for : 10

Name of Responsible Federation : USA Table Tennis

Name of Organising Committee Chairman: David Huggins

Dates of Play: July 3 – 6, 2000

Name of Technical Delegate: Christian Lillieroos USA

Report submitted to IPC and ITTC: July 16, 2000

Accommodation: The tournament was for classes 1 – 10, therefore accessibility issues were important. The Tournament Hotel was the excellent 5-star Marriott Marina only 400 meters away from the venue. The participants were charged US\$75/night, which is less than half of the normal price. Traditionally US Open does not provide any meal service to the participants, but it could be helpful if the organizers could provide with a nearby restaurant list that had accessible space. This could be a resource of advertising revenue as well. The organizers provided no Hotel reservation service. In the future a lodging reservation form could be prepared with the Hotel that goes out with the entry package so a team can easier enter and reserve lodging as a group.

Venue: The hall was the Ft Lauderdale Convention centre. It was 400m away from the Hotel. US Open organized events for 750 players the ITTF Pro tour with about 200 players and the Paralympic events with 26 entries. This was played on 85 tables where 6 wheelchair tables were permanently in use for the Paralympic events for Wednesday to Friday. The tournament had very low entries compared to previous years. Last year US Open's Paralympic events had 50 entries and in 2000 it was 153. Due to the low entries the format was made to maximize play with as far as possible round robins of 6 players.

Floor: All the 85 tables had a concrete floor as a base. The ITTF Pro tour used 18 tables and all those had a Tara flex floor on top. We requested some use of Taraflex floor tables for our standing events, but the request was denied. They are the one that suffers severely by playing on a concrete floor. For able-bodied athletes a concrete floor is an illegal floor due to the injury risk. For disabled standing athletes with reduced or in some classes almost no muscle functions in the legs it is extremely hazardous for the joints to play on a concrete floor. A concrete floor for the wheelchairs is since Sydney approved. Recommendation for next year is that the Tara flex floor tables should be included in the planning for the Paralympic events as well. When the ITTF PRO tour is not using them they should be made available for the P.E. as much as possible. The courts used were furthest away from the main entrance, which made the event lose much attention.

Lighting: Very good intensity. No windows existed

Airflow: No problems.

Spectator seats: It was only about 20 chairs around the 6 wheelchair tables. No spectator arrangements were made for the Paralympic events. It was a separate hall in the Convention centre that used exclusively for the ITTF Pro tour with about 1500 seats. That was well organized and it had sold out sessions for the feature matches. No intentions were made to use any of the matches from the International Paralympic events for the arena or for spectators. Some high level athletes was present for the Paralympic events, also with USA involvement in the finals, but the opportunity to bring world class USA athletes in the highlights was missed again. For next year it would be nice to include at least some matches for the Spectators in the venue. I predict that it would be entertaining for the spectators especially if USA players are involved.

Referee's table: A designated referee table was arranged right next to the P.E tables, and this year the control desk was improved with its own computer and printer. It was on the floor so it was wheelchairs accessible. A designated referee and deputy referee for the Paralympic events was assigned this year. A designated Tournament director was designated to the P.E., which was a needed improvement. Two persons were working in computer operations. This made the administration of the tournament very good. The entries were very low so it was easy to run.

Gluing room: Outside the Convention centre.

Official's room: No officials lounge for the tournaments officials was organized.

Practising tables: No tables were allocated for this. The Pro Tour had 4 specially allocated practice tables, but not for the P. E. With the low entries it was not really needed.

Equipment: Tables: 6 Butterfly Europa tables stationary green ITTF and ITTC approved
Balls: NITTAKU *** Premium ITTF, orange
Scorers: Butterfly, black
Net/Post: Butterfly, ITTF
Sorrounds : Butterfly, green

Competition days :

July 3 – 5: 2000 Playing days
July 2, 2000: arrival and classification day for participants. Draw of the Open and team events were made in a public format at the Team leader meeting that night.
July 3, 2000: Open singles, Men Wheelchair, Standing and Women Wheelchair. All events in Round Robin format.
July 4, 2000: Team events. The Draw for Class Singles where conducted by the referee controlled by the TD in a non-public format, to save time.
July 5, 2000: Singles in classes + All medals ceremonies.
July 6, 2000: Day of Departure for the delegations.

Number of Participants:

Wheelchair + Standing	29 entered 26 played
Staff	? The organizers kept no record

Together for capitation taxes 26 x US\$10 = US\$260

9 countries took part in the US Open Championships P. E. The results report was done very carefully and finished during the tournament. The coaches and team leaders did not pay entry fees so they can not be tracked. For next year the staff has to be included in the registration process. It is also necessary to pay capitation tax to ITTC for them as well, which was excused this year by ITTC as an exception. In Women's wheelchair it was only 3 entries but they were allowed by the TD to make an event. The Men class 4-5 singles had 4 entries but one athlete defaulted. That same athlete played in all earlier events. It was some discussion over if that event would qualify for bonus points or not. My answer was it did not, but I am open for corrections or suggestions on that issue.

Transport: No official transport from the two Airports was arranged. Some of the European teams came in to the 45-minute drive away Miami airport. The Ft Lauderdale airport is only a 15-minute drive away. This tournament had very small delegations so it was not that big of a deal. The organizers should have provided some referral service at least. No transport from the Hotel to venue was organized, but it was a very short wheelchair accessible walk. The recommendation for the future is to still provide transportation from the Airport for officials and the delegations.

Officials: Classifiers: Dr. Rafael Martinez Cayere Puerto Rico
 Referee: Mal Anderson USA
 Deputy referee: Larry Kesler USA

It was some controversy over that Sharon Brooks from USA, who was at the tournament already, was not allowed by the ITTC medical committee to be the designated classifier. She is a senior

classifier and very competent. This increased the expenses for the organizers a lot compared to if Sharon would be allowed to be the classifier. The justification from ITTC is that according to the new policy the Head classifier has to be from outside the organizers country to ensure impartial decisions, in the same way as the policy always has been with the TD.

The referee made a report which included a suggested warning by ITTC of Martin Pelletier class 10 from CAN, due to inappropriate behaviour to an umpire. This warning should be sent to all Technical Delegates and to the NPC of CAN.

Umpires: For the Paralympic events only 1 umpire was assigned per shift. The overall tournament had 43 umpires but almost all were assigned to the ITTF Pro tour. ITTC rules states that in an ITTC 10 point sanctioned tournament each match needs to have one official, but that rule was not respected. Many of the umpires were aware of the need of officials for the Paralympic events, and offered on their free time to help out. One way that encouraged the umpires to officiate for the Paralympic events was the participants in the ITTC umpire exam. They had to complete the practical component by officiating in wheelchair matches.

Meeting: On the arrival day an informative meeting with the team leaders was conducted.

At the meeting they were informed of the tournament program, and the draw for Open and team events were done. The meeting was very disorganized because not enough time for preparation was allocated, and made it unnecessary time consuming.

EDP: An ITTC Umpire seminar with 10 umpires who did not pay a fee was conducted in English. 7 passed and it was conducted by Delano Fai from Canada, a member of the ITTC Technical committee.

Classification: 10 players were scheduled to be classified, and 8 were completed (2 defaults).

Results: Two experienced good computer operations staff was working exclusively for the Paralympic events with one computer and a printer. In addition a laptop and jet printer was used for general information flyers and the ITTC results reports. The Sport information desk delivered information to the nations appropriate files. The participating countries got the complete result book during the awards presentation on Friday. The ITTC Results form was finished during the tournament. The Results form and Result books will be sent to IPC and ITTC Headquarters and to the ITTC ranking officer Gael Marziou.

Other staff: English was the official language. The organizers did not have assigned interpreters for other languages, but within the staff, German, and Spanish did successfully complete all the translation needs. The organizers didn't use enough ball persons. In every session about 1 ball person on an average was provided, when the real need was 6 in each shift. It is difficult to recruit ball person for the organizer but this was worse than previous years. This was the most important issue this year. Some players can not play unless a ball person is provided. The Sport information was good and the system with a file for each nation worked well.

Any other matter:

The Tournament director did an excellent job and handled this new type of international tournament for him efficient. The computer operations staffs did a good job, and were efficient. Due to the low entries it was pretty easy to organize. Some players entered the able bodied events and some complication took place on Friday where the regular US Open would have defaulted the P.E. athletes if they were not played. Again due to the low entries it was possible to work around that, but in a normal entry scenario this would not have been possible. It was no opening

ceremony organized. The organizers do not have the capacity to organize an opening ceremony with such a large tournament. No flags of the countries were hanged up in the playing area. That would be nice to add if the resources were there.

The **Medals ceremony** was organized at one time this year. The TD pretty much organized the awards presentation at the end of the whole tournament. It was made in an area where pictures could be taken. No music or podium was presented but it was still acceptable. The awards plaques were very nice and appreciated, and made especially for the Paralympic events. No Closing ceremony were arranged either.

No **drinks or refreshments** were made available to the athletes during the competition.

No **special Medical service** was organized and especially in one incident with an Italian athlete that service was clearly missed. That needs to be addressed for next year.

Finals evaluations – it was the fifth ITTC tournament for the Organizing committee and was good organized. The situation with unexpected low entries compared to previous year made it pretty easy. Based on the circumstances and my personal knowledge of what limitations (mostly financial) USA has in organizing Paralympic Table Tennis, I was happy with the outcome. All matches were played on their scheduled time, which is the most important service for the athletes. Most entries were checked to make sure that the correct National Paralympic Committees were approving the entries. One athlete from the Dominican republic did enter after the deadline and was at first rejected but he showed up at the tournament and he also got his NPC approval the day the tournament started, and was allowed to compete in the class singles, but the decision was made that he could no compete in the Open singles or team events.

Recommendation for next year.

1) Organize the Paralympic Events separate from the regular US Open.

September 2003 would be an excellent time, due to next qualifications to Athens. If tournaments are organized after September 1st and before December 1st 2003 they will both count for the seeding and selection for Athens. If it is done at an Olympic Training centre the accommodation, meals and transportation can be accommodated by the centre. The flooring would not be an issue there either, they have wooden floor. The centre has excellent accessible rooms. The hall there could also accommodate warm up tables. With that environment and if a little extra resources were made available, USA would be capable to organize a 30 point tournament. Just remember to apply 12 months in advance and a TD inspection of the facilities has to take place no later than 8 months before the tournament date. One qualified umpire on each table has to be assigned, and 1 ball persons as well. 8 competition tables and 8 warm up tables should be enough for a 3 day tournament. You can expect 100-150 entries.

2) Create a separate entry form for the Paralympic Events.

The final events that need to be played should not be decided until all the entries are finalized. It is difficult to guess the entries ahead of time. It will not change the economy or the schedule of the tournament. This can be decided right when all the entries are counted for. An athlete can only enter in his/her own class but the combination of classes needs to be decided after the entries arrives. If a separate entry form is done you only list class singles, and they enter in their own class if there is enough entries, if not they will be combined with the next highest. In that form they also list the staff from each nation and can make up credentials for them as well and charge the capitation tax and something extra if needed from the organizers. A Hotel registration form and Airport transportation

information can be put in there as well. Specific sponsors for the Paralympic events can also be sought. I would recommend a fixed entry fee that represents three events for all athletes. They should maybe not be able to enter regular US open Wednesday to Friday, to simplify scheduling.

4) Taraflex floored Table Tennis courts

Plan to give Tara flex tables to the P.E. if they are free from use for the ITTF PRO tour. Negotiate that with ITTF ahead of time. If possible give 2 Tara flex floored tables to the P.E. for the standing events.

5) Prepare and plan to have one umpire on each of the tables assigned to the P.E.

Additional umpires can be found if it is included in the entry package that nations can bring their own umpires. Especially if another ITTC umpire seminar is held next year and published, it will attract international umpires to the tournament. It is of course a financial issue to have more umpires, maybe that can be included in the planning for the fees. If 43 umpires were used this year at least 53 would be necessary for next year. Only 1 umpire was assigned to the P.E. and 5 more would be needed for each shift.

6) Create a special award area for the whole tournament. The US Open as well as the P.E. could use that area. Put a drape in the background with the sponsor's logos visible for pictures, and an award podium. An awards table can be put right next to the podium for the presenters to put the trophies. It means a lot for the athletes to have an official presentation. All the other arrangements that were done this year would be enough. This area could also be used for media if needed.

Overall it was a good ITTC tournament Ranking Factor 10. With the above adjustments it will be even better. One thing that was encouraging was that previous years TD report was read and adjustments were made accordingly to this year's tournament in almost all accounts. I am very confident that next year's tournament will be done even better.

Christian Lillieroos, TD of ITTC
July 15, 2002