

Table tennis toddler hits headlines

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You have probably seen over the last couple of days a new rising star to the world of table tennis.

What started as a simple video for family turned into a massive internet and television hit reaching as far as America with its creator left in awe of its impact.

I am, of course, talking about the YouTube video featuring young Jamie Myskova-Buddell playing multiball with his father, Kevin.

While 19-month-old Jamie is still yet to learn to talk for himself, we spoke to Kevin about the extraordinary turn of events of the last few days.

He said: "I'm completely overawed by what has happened. As all the guys in Senior British League Division Two and Woolwell Table Tennis Club know he is a little pain in the bum! As soon as he sees a table he wants to be on it."

He added: "Marketa and I take him away to the British League with us and he just wants to be on the table all the time. Loads of the guys at British League have been encouraging him and have put up with his loud tantrums.

"As can be seen in the video, Vicky Smith (current England junior) and Mike Griffiths in the background are pretty oblivious to it as they see him do it so regularly."

When the ETTA featured the video on its Facebook and Twitter pages last Friday the video had less than 100,000 views on the social networking site YouTube. However, since then its exposure has been astonishing and at a current count, it stands at over 1.3 million hits (1.6 inc. tributes).

As Kevin acknowledges, this was more than he ever expected: "We only loaded the clip on the web so Marketas' family in Czech Republic could watch him play. He has regularly done multiball with us and loves it."

While this is all very exciting for the table tennis community. Kevin has ensured that Jamie's feet stay firmly on the ground (or table) for now.

He said: "We have decided not to do any TV as it is all a bit much. However, Jamie and I did appear via Skype on Good Morning America, which was a bit surreal and the Ellen DeGeneres show asked for us to fly out to LA and appear on the show.

All the UK television networks have asked us to appear and the BBC One show called me numerous times trying to persuade us to appear this Friday with Chris Evans. Most networks across Europe have also asked permission to use the clip. I have also been contacted by media in the Far East and Australia."

It's clear the cool-head runs in the family as Jamie has also carried on with his usual routine despite all the attention.

His father revealed: "Jamie is only 19 months old and has no inkling whatsoever as to the chaos he has caused. He can't even speak so to try and replicate the same on TV would be horrendous.

"He attends Paul Whittings' regional squad training every Friday with his older brother Ollie and immediately joins in with the warm-ups before a few minutes multiball. Then messes around for a while before joining in with the stretching and warm downs at the end of the session."

As for the future of the young protégé, Kevin is willing to let Jamie decide on his own path but will help him along the way: "We have decided as a family to try and promote table tennis in the UK as much as we can from this

without it impacting too much on our little family's life as we never intended to profit from this innocent family video."

He added: "Hopefully the story has an extremely positive outcome and Jamie can, as usual, do practically whatever he wants whenever he wants and, as long as he wants to hit balls, we will help him."

You might be able to see more of Jamie in the future but for now, if you haven't already (or even if you already have) here is the video that everybody's talking about:

By Russell Moore

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