

Newsletter 3: December 2014

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Posted On: January 15, 2014



English Table Tennis Association
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To: Members of the English Table Tennis Association

From: Andy Seward, Chairman of the ETTA

In this newsletter, I would like to explain the changes we are making and put them into the context of the future of English table tennis. As previously, I will highlight the information here and provide links back to the ETTA website for those of you who wish to have more information on each topic.

The journey.....

It is 12 months since English table tennis was given notice by our major funders, Sport England, to put our house in order. We were one of only six sports out of nearly 50 who failed to achieve the usual four-year funding commitment. It was a major blow and left us with an uncertain future.

It was made it clear that there had to be major changes to the governance and structure of the ETTA and the way in which it administered table tennis in England, if there was to be any guarantees of further funding. The ETTA was given a short-term allocation of funding to see us through one year and £8 million was held back dependent on evidence of improvement.

Now, we have our first real test. This month members of the ETTA Board are making our case to Sport England, after which we will find out if we have made sufficient progress to merit a further tranche of funding.

A time for change:

When I became Chairman of the ETTA six months ago, I was certain that we needed to start again from the beginning, not be afraid to pull apart what had existed in the past, re-examine every aspect of the way we operated, and rebuild our organisation from the ground up.

I brought in a new team on the ETTA Board of people who are linked to table tennis as players, umpires or organisers, but also who possess the necessary professional skills and experience to oversee a national sports governing body during a radical upheaval. We also appointed the right person to head the organisation and deliver this change management as our new CEO, Sara Sutcliffe, who can combine her legal, personnel and sporting background to drive the organisation into the future.

At our first National Council meeting, I was pleased with the huge support from National Councillors who voted that they take a more advisory and liaison role and hand over the policy-making power to our new Board.

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/the-future-of-english-table-tennis/>

Before we could look to the outside, we needed to take a long, hard look at our own organisation. The ETTA's location in Hastings was not fit for purpose...and is in fact due to be demolished next year. We have looked to the future and decided to move to a new purpose-built administrative head office combined with on-site playing facilities in Milton Keynes.

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/newsletter-2-november-2013/>

We also needed to look at the way the ETTA operated, both in head office and in the field. We have now divided our operations into four distinct areas of responsibility and are currently recruiting four senior managers to take on responsibilities as Head of Coaching and Performance; Head of Development; Head of Operations; and Head of Marketing and Communications. This will give us a more focused direction under a senior management team. As well as changes in our head office structure, we have looked at changes in the field. We had been operating in nine distinct regions and this was not making the best use of our resources, as there were many incidences where these units were operating in isolation and best practice was not necessarily common practice. We are now creating four larger areas, in line with the Sport England approach. These areas will have bigger teams who can offer support across a wider area.

Part of this process is the creation of Talent Development Centres, where we will highlight, develop and nurture young table tennis talent across England.

Funded by Sport England, the first four Talent Development Centres will operate as a partnership between the ETTA and local clubs. A leading table tennis coach in each location will be tasked with the implementation of this ambitious talent development programme. This robust system will bring high quality coaching and access to the right environment for our young, talented players as they set out on the right road to future successes.

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/talent-development-centres-announced/>

All of these changes will work alongside our significant and valued volunteer network. Be assured, we do not underestimate the contribution our volunteers make to English table tennis.

These are difficult times and I am grateful for the continuing support from the table tennis family, including the ETTA staff and all our volunteers. I hope that in the next newsletter I will be able to report more positive news and that Sport England will acknowledge that the ETTA has changed direction and is now on the right road. If that is the case, then I am hopeful that our sport will be rewarded with some financial security for the future.

Congratulations to...

.....Liam Pitchford who has reached number 54 (up from 125 the previous month) in the latest ITTF World Rankings, following excellent performances against world class opposition in the Poland and German Opens.

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/pitchford-shatters-world-top-100-in-latest-rankings/>

.....Richard Scruton, Deputy Chairman of the ETTA, on his appointment to the position of Secretary-General with the European Table Tennis Union (ETTU)

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/richard-scruton-appointed-secretary-general-of-ettu/>

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our members, volunteers, officials, partners and staff.

Andy Seward

Chairman of ETTA

December 2013

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