



Chairman's Message – July 2016

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Next week is the third time the table tennis community has come together to hold National Table Tennis Day.

It gives us an opportunity to showcase our sport to a wider audience, encourage newcomers to participate and grow our competitive base.

Many leagues and clubs have initiated their own creative events to highlight our sport. We recognise that it is this grass roots support for table tennis which is so important for our future development.

Table tennis is one of the few sports which can be played from childhood throughout long and active lives. As such we are well placed to help to fulfill Sport England's 'Towards an Active Nation' strategy.

Sport in the 21st century is about participation as well as competition. Our aim, through events such as the popular outdoor Ping! initiative and events such as National Table Tennis Day is to introduce table tennis to as many people as possible, regardless of their age and ability.

This increased participation at a social level will have a knock-on effect and lead to a growth in the leagues, clubs, counties, tournaments – and ultimately our elite players.

However, while social participation will increase the numbers of players – we are also keenly aware that it is our clubs and leagues structure which provide the fundamentals to move people from casual play to competitive play – and from there to achieving higher accolades in the sport.

I hope our members are now aware of the new round of facility funding from Table Tennis England, and will consider how their own clubs could benefit from improved facilities and opportunities to increase participation and performance. [It is explained in more detail here.](#)

A sport for all

We have often said that table tennis is a sport for all, for life and it was never so clearly demonstrated by two

recent events. We have just staged our youngest national championships, including an Under 10s category. It is inspirational to see the standard and commitment of these young players and gives us cause to have much hope for the future.

And also, as I mentioned in the last newsletter, more than 250 of our veteran players recently participated in the World Veteran Championships in Alicante. We are all delighted that Pam Butcher won the world titles in the O/85s singles and the O/80s doubles – to add to her two gold medals in the European Championships. Pam is not only a great competitor on the table but is an excellent ambassador for our sport off the table.

And finally, preparations are well underway for the Rio Olympics and Paralympics. We are so proud of all our players who have earned the right to compete in the greatest sporting arena in the world. Good luck to you all.

And best wishes for National Table Tennis Day on Thursday, July 14.

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