Chairman's Message - November 2016

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There is a tangible buzz about the top level of English table tennis at the moment. Our men's and women's teams – as well as some outstanding individual performances – continue to thrill as they consistently chalk up wins against quality international opposition.

The recent matches in the European Qualifying Championships have been a showcase for excellent table tennis and some nail-biting games.

They have also been innovative in another way in that we have been able to use the modern media technology via the new and emerging internet channels to bring these performances directly to our audience in their homes, clubs or while they are on the go.

For many sports, this is still a comparatively new and uncharted initiative and it is great that it is table tennis which is leading the way and breaking new ground.

The live streaming of these matches through our new broadcast partners is delivering table tennis to an audience in a way – and in numbers – we have not previously experienced. The response and 'reach' of our new media broadcasts has exceeded all our expectations, as established players enjoy the skills and abilities of our elite players; and new viewers experience the excitement and drama of the game.

It clearly demonstrates that there is an appetite out there to watch and to participate in our sport. It is our challenge to capture and captivate that interest.

It is our ability – as a sport – to adapt and exploit these new opportunities which will place us in good standing in the future. Table tennis is a dynamic sport and we need to be able to showcase that to the next generation of players; our potential and existing commercial partners; and our core membership.

We have to be prepared to innovate in the ways we promote and deliver our sport.

Sport will not be immune to the economic and technological challenges faced in all aspects of life. It is a reality

that the landscape has been changing for a number of years in the way sport is delivered in this country.

The winners – and the survivors – will be those sports which are prepared to adapt and embrace the changes. I believe table tennis is at the cutting edge of that change and that we are well-placed to capitalise on all the potential opportunities.

We are fortunate that we are an 'accessible' sport to all ages and abilities. There can be few people in the country who have not, at some time, played table tennis, whether in their youth, as a social activity or in a competitive structure.

We have a natural audience and we are well-placed to engage with them now and going forward, if we are prepared to make changes and actively embrace the opportunities which are available.

I'd like to conclude this short piece by highlighting another fantastic asset our sport has – the young men and women who represent England, and who are playing in the international arena.

Not only are they challenging the best in the world – and in some cases being the best in the world – but they are doing so in a manner which exemplifies what our sport is about. I am so proud of the way they conduct themselves on and off the table. They are excellent ambassadors for table tennis and I offer my sincere thanks to all of them.

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