

Chairman's Newsletter (17): September 2015

To: Members of Table Tennis England

From: Sandra Deaton, Chairman, Table Tennis England

**In this newsletter:**

- Have your say on the future of our sport
- New benefits of membership
- Strong England team for the European Championships
- New tournament web-page

It's incredible to think the new season is already here. I'm sure many of you having already played, officiated, volunteered or spectated at a tournament – and those who have not will doubtless be doing so very soon as the local leagues get into full swing. May I therefore start by wishing you all a happy, enjoyable and successful season of table tennis.

Not that the sport totally shut down for the summer, of course. On the international stage, England's next generation had great success at the European Youth Championships in Slovakia and the Euro Minis Championship in France – see more in the 'congratulations' section below.

Meanwhile, the annual Ping! festival was more successful than ever, with an estimated one million games played on more than 1,000 tables in 19 locations.

And the second annual #TableTennisDay saw events all over the country from Cornwall to Cumbria, spreading the word to thousands of potential new players and raising the profile of the sport. We are aware of more than 200 organisations, including clubs, schools and workplaces, which hosted events and we have had very positive feedback from them.

The day also attracted the attention of Sky Sports News, who interviewed England legend Desmond Douglas, current players Sam Walker, Kelly Sibley and Andrew Baggaley, plus our Chief Executive Sara Sutcliffe. The features ran over the course of several hours, reaching a huge number of viewers. #TableTennisDay and Ping! really are vital to the long-term future of the sport because they give us a chance to showcase all that is good about table tennis and to provide new opportunities to attract new players – who may then go on to play in the club structure. The success of participation events such as Ping! also feeds directly into our Sport England strategy.

**Nationwide sporting strategy**

Mention of Sport England leads me to urge you to have your say on the Government's public consultation on a new nationwide strategy for sport.

The consultation covers 10 key themes ranging from participation and infrastructure to coaching and elite funding and there is no doubt the landscape of sport and how it is funded will change.

We're keen for people involved in table tennis to take part in the public consultation, which takes the form of an online survey, to ensure our sport's voice is heard and we can continue to thrive.

Click on this link to read more: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/have-your-say-on-the-future-of-sport/>

We have put together a working group to draft our own response as a governing body, and this will be shared with the National Council and Board before it is finalised.

**Mission 2025**

Our own strategy for the future has now been published. Mission 2025 sets out our values, aims and ambitions, paying particular attention to raising participation, growing the network of clubs and facilities, increasing the numbers of coaches and volunteers and supporting our elite athletes to perform at world-class level.

We have set bold and ambitious targets and Mission 2025 is our road map to achieve them. The document is available online by clicking here: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Mission-Statement-for-web.pdf>

We also plan to send out copies to clubs and other key stakeholders in the coming weeks.

### **Membership renewals and benefits**

At the time of writing, more than 19,000 people have become members of Table Tennis England for the 2015/16 season. These include Player Licences, Player membership and Associate membership. To remind you, Associate membership – which is free of charge – is for club players, social players, officials and fans who wish to become affiliated with Table Tennis England, but do not want to take part in organised competition. It is part of the minimum requirements for people who wish to coach, umpire, referee, administrate or organise table tennis tournaments that they hold at least an Associate membership.

In addition, it is a mandatory requirement for all PremierClub members to register as an Associate member. This is because the insurance policy of the PremierClub is only valid for direct members of Table Tennis England and failure to do so could leave the club liable for damages and legal costs.

All members, including Associates, can enjoy our membership benefits. We have introduced a number of extra benefits this season, including up to 30% off hotels thanks to Intercontinental Hotels Group, discounts on Forest Holidays and money off balls through [TableTennis.deals](http://TableTennis.deals)

You can read more about these benefits here:

<http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/membership/benefits/>

When you consider that playing membership fees have been frozen this year and Associate membership is free of charge, it really is a great time to join us!

### **Keep in the Loop**

Another benefit of membership is that you qualify for a £30 discount on our Loop at Work scheme. Loop is our social brand, which aims to get people playing table tennis in locations they already visit. One of these is at work, and we are offering a series of packages which enable workplaces to buy tables and other equipment at vastly discounted prices.

If you would like to share your passion for table tennis with your colleagues, visit our Loop website to find out how you can do so: [www.KeepInTheLoop.co.uk](http://www.KeepInTheLoop.co.uk)

### **Tournament web-page**

With the competitions beginning to come thick and fast this season, we have improved the tournaments and entry forms page on our website. It is now searchable by date, location, type of tournament or tournament organiser, making it easier to find information about the tournament you are looking for. You can visit the page here: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/tournaments/>

### **Grand Prix Series**

The second Grand Prix of this year's series takes place in Aldershot on October 3 and 4 and entries close this week. If you would like to enter, follow this link:

<http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/aldershot-grand-prix-dont-miss-out-enter-now/>

### **Plastic balls**

And don't forget, whichever tournament you are playing in, you should now be using the plastic balls. We envisage supplies of celluloid balls falling away and the ITTF ceasing to approve them, so it is in everyone's interests to confirm the move to plastic.

This Q&A document explains more of the reasons behind this change:

<http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/plastic-balls-your-questions-answered-2/>

### **Coming up**

England's top players will be in action at two high-profile tournaments in the next few weeks. Our current No 1 players Paul Drinkhall and Kelly Sibley spearhead the men's and women's teams at the European Championships which start in Ekaterinburg, Russia, next week. Previews will be on our website in the next few days.

Meanwhile, a younger team will travel to Surat in India for the Commonwealth Championships in December: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/young-england-stars-will-get-chance-to-shine-in-india/>

It is exciting to report that we may get the chance to see more of the England team competing in this country in the near future as the structure for the European Championships is changing to feature home and away qualifying fixtures. Watch this space for more details as they become available.

### **Congratulations**

To Andrew Baggaley for his brilliant victory over world No 31 Patrick Franziska of Germany at the Czech Open: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/czech-out-baggaleys-brilliant-results/>

To Danny Reed, Sam Walker and Liam Pitchford, who all recorded some notable wins at the Austrian Open: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/reed-walker-upset-second-seeds-in-wels/>

To the England teams at the European Youth Championships in Bratislava, all of whom achieved their performance targets, with the Junior Girls' team of Tin-Tin Ho, Maria Tsapsinos and Lois Peake finishing seventh: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/peake-helps-england-girls-scale-the-heights/>

To Jamie Liu, who finished seventh at the Euro Minis Championships in Strasbourg, and to all our young players who acquitted themselves so well: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/liu-hits-top-eight-at-euro-minis/>

To all those who competed at the 2015 Sainsbury's School Games in Manchester – and to the Table Tennis England staff who put on such a great tournament: <http://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/ramsden-and-finn-take-school-games-gold/>

To Paul and Jo Drinkhall, who appeared on the mystery guest slot on the BBC's A Question of Sport – playing table tennis against swimming legend and 'mystery man' Mark Foster.

To 11-times National Champion Desmond Douglas on reaching his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday this summer (and many thanks to Des for his commitment to #TableTennisDay, including giving national TV and radio interviews on the day).