

## 2014 Season End – News Archive

### Canada Series #3

With two seasons left as a Junior, Matthew Lehmann decided to put his efforts towards seeing what he can accomplish in Table Tennis. To test his progress, Lehmann planned to enter two tournaments that are part of the Canada Series, a five tournament series, hoping to gain enough points to qualify for the JOOLA Canada Series Finals in the middle of February.

In December Lehmann travelled to Laval, Quebec for the ‘Omnium du Quebec’. He competed in two Canada Series events: the Junior Singles, Men’s Singles. On the second day, he competed in the Team Event which is part of all Quebec Circuit tournaments.

In sports one often talks about the “luck of the draw”. So, if one can be lucky in a draw, then the opposite must also be true – you can be unlucky. Lehmann experienced the latter. Men’s singles starts with a round robin group of 4. The top two would go in the Division A to contest positions one through eight, and the bottom two of the group would go to the ‘B Side’ to play for positions nine and higher. Lehmann’s group had Klement Yeung (2863) and Antoine Bernadete (2912) that went on to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Men’s singles. Needless to say Lehmann was not in the top two of the group, so he went to ‘B Side’. Lehmann won the ‘B Side’ – effectively finishing 9<sup>th</sup>. Not bad, but that position did not award any points for the Canada Series.

On an interesting side note, Quebec athlete Antoine Bernadete (2912) is now training in Sweden for 4 months in an effort to try to win the Canadian Jr Boys title at the Canadian Championships this summer. Also training in Europe is Quebec junior Marko Medjugorac (2837). The level of commitment to become the Canadian champion has been elevated by these two young men. You can follow their results on the ITTF website, as they compete in European events this winter/spring.

In Junior singles, Lehmann moved beyond group play only to meet the eventual 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher, relegating him to play for positions 5-8. In his final game, Lehmann was up 2-0 against an opponent that he beat earlier in the day. His opponent, Santiago Ramirez, ‘woke up’ and was returning every shot, tying the games to 2-2. Down 9-5 in the 5<sup>th</sup>, Lehmann took a time out. The time out worked, as he rallied, tying the game at 10. But it was too little, too late, and ultimately lost 12-10. “Why did I serve long on that last point - he was hitting everything in sight. Why did I do that?,” Lehmann lamented after the loss. There is a lesson to be learned --- “when you are up 2-0 do not think the game is over -- find a way to finish it!” Matthew finished 7<sup>th</sup> in Junior Boys Singles, gaining Canada Series points.

The second day is Team. For the Team event, two players, of roughly equivalent rating, make up a team. All of the singles matches are played, and in the case of a tie, the doubles game is played. Lehmann was teamed with Patrick Galarneau (2233), who was coming back to the sport after a 10 year hiatus. In the Division A, the team was relegated to the ‘B side’. Lehmann was able to exact his revenge for the previous day’s loss, taking Ramirez 3-0 in the last Team match.

It went down to the doubles, and it was an exciting win for the Lehmann/Galarneau team, winning the 'B side' of Division A.

It was a good tournament, with 18 singles matches providing good match experience.

#### **Canada Series #4**

Travelling west this time, Lehmann entered the Vancouver Open for the January 18-19 tournament.

Doubles, a non-Canada Series event, was the first event of the Vancouver Open. Lehmann taking a short-cut to the gym that turned out to be anything but, arrived at the gym just in time for the start of doubles. Finding a doubles partner in Evans Chu (1820), the team was second out their group losing to Meng Gu (3109) and Allan Zhou (1489). Lehmann and Chu made it through the cross-over game to face Meng and Zhou in the final. A 3-1 loss meant that Lehmann and Chu came away with second place in doubles, and with enough winnings to cover the cost of their entry fee (but nowhere near the airline ticket cost).

In Junior Boys Singles, Allan Zhou (1489) was 'punching well above his weight.' Zhou has been training with Meng Gu and the training is paying off. It took Lehmann to four games in round robin play to beat Zhou, and also took Michael Luo (2823) five games in the semi-final to beat Zhou. It was a Lehmann vs. Luo final. Lehmann, eager to test the results of the MTTA Christmas Training Camp, has played Luo several times in the past, but has never been able to win a game off Luo. It was war of attrition with Lehmann's wrist wrapped and Luo dealing with a leg injury. Winning the third game 12-10, Lehmann was up 2-1. Then it was 2-2. In the fifth, Lehmann was up 8-7, but opting for safe shots versus 'going for it' -- a 11-9 loss meant a 3-2 win for Luo. So, Lehmann finished second, earning Canada Series points.

In Open Mens, Matthew was seeded 4<sup>th</sup> and had a disappointing quarter final where he met a red hot Frank Liao. Matthew recovered to finished 5<sup>th</sup>, enough to earn Canada Series points, but wishing he had made the semi-final.

A great tournament. And the highlight for Diane was seeing people playing basketball outside in short sleeves in January!

#### **NEW FIRSTS AT THE BOSTON PIZZA RED RIVER OPEN:**

The M.T.T.A. hosted the "Boston Pizza Red River Open Championships" on December 14<sup>th</sup> at the John J. Hatcher Track and Fitness Center at Daniel MacIntrye Collegiate. This was the second event in the 2013-2014, \$2,500 Manitoba Circuit. While Circuit leader Matthew "Leftie Lehmann" was in Montreal nailing down 9<sup>th</sup> spot in the Canada Series Quebec Open under 18 Years event, the door was opened here in Manitoba.

First through the door was the M.T.T.A's equivalent of Manny Pacquiao-young Manuel Zaki. Zaki, sporting ferocious forehand and backhands assaults drove veteran youth player Sergiu Buda back from the table to take the Youth title. However, in the Open Singles final, Sergiu exacted revenge turning the tables on him in a thrilling seven game match that went the distance...split decision for Sergiu. These titles for Manuel and Sergiu's were their firsts in these events.

Also, on the Woman's side of things, young Tina Liu collected her first Woman's singles title defeating Naomi Tran in straight sets. The Woman's Circuit is an exciting one as there are 4-5 girls all of whom can challenge for the title. It appears to boil down to who holds the hottest hand on the day.

Alex Mendoza knocked Senior Circuit leader Michal Rybak out of the semi-final and then defeated Jerzy Kusal in another 5 set match that went the distance to take the over 40 title.

Peguis Table Tennis Club dominated much of the play in remaining divisions. Isiah Sutherland, Dennis Stevenson and Carson Chubb all took home title trophies. Thanks to Alexis Wilson their coach for the fine work that she is doing.

Terry "Hop-a-long-on-one-foot" Zhang and Sergiu teamed up to defeat Alex and Gerardo Makinano to take the Open Doubles crown.

Congratulations to all players and have safe and joyous holidays.

Ron Edwards Reporting

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**HOLIDAY TRIVIA QUIZZ-WIN A M.T.T.A. BUTTERFLY TRACKSUIT!**

Ok, all you M.T.T.A. history buffs...attached here is a photo...first person who comes to me at the December 14<sup>th</sup> Red River Open tournament and correctly identifies all persons in the photo plus the year it was taken, wins a free "Team Toba" Butterfly tracksuit! (Executive Members excluded...as you lot already know!).

Ron Edwards Quiz Master.

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**WINNIPEG & DISTRICT LEAGUE UP & RUNNING!**

Players old and young, beginner to expert...time to “Get-Out-Of-The-Basement!” Every Wednesday night from 6:30 –9:30 pm, there are about 40 avid “ping-pongers” of all ages, shapes and sizes out competing in the Winnipeg & District Table Tennis League. Players are in groups of pools of 5 so each night you get 4 matches, best of 5 games to eleven points. The following week, you move up or down a division depending upon how you finished the week prior...top 2 up/ 3<sup>rd</sup>'s stay the same/ bottom 2 down a division. Thus each week, “you rise to your own level of incompetence.” But seriously, if you like ping pong or table tennis, come on out and give this a try! Results count towards Manitoba Ratings and Rankings and are looked at for the selection of our Provincial teams. Play occurs in the basement gym of Daniel Macintyre Collegiate. More information can be found by clicking the link to the left “Winnipeg League Sign-Up.”

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**“LEFTIE LEHMANN” CAPTURES TITLE AT UNITED STATES OPEN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

Team ‘Just in Time’ won Division 3 at the Joola North American Teams in Washington, DC this past U.S. long weekend.

Matthew (“Leftie Lehmann”) was asked by Lester Lee (BC) and Jeremy Hazen (ON) to create a team for this tournament. The email and face book message was noticed and read 20 minutes before the tournament entry deadline --- the Lehmann’s made a quick decision and team ‘Just in Time’ entered the tournament.

The tournament is a Team tournament with all games being singles and it is best of 9 amongst the players. With 900 competitors there would be great competition.

Day 1 is the qualification round. Each team, based on their combined rating, is put in group of 5 teams with higher and lower combined rating. ‘Just in Time’ was the third team of the group of five, with two teams with higher rating and two teams with lower rating. The team narrowly lost in this round and maintained their position and were placed in Division 3 (out of 13 Divisions)

Day 2 and Day 3 was play in Division 3. The team won their group and advanced to the semi-final. It was a close semi-final with ‘Just in Time’ eventually winning to move on to the final. The Division 3 Final between ‘Just in Time’ and a team from Puerto Rico, was still playing at 10pm -- the last table still playing as forklifts were removing 100 courts and tearing down the hall. Matthew had to call a ‘let’ when the headlights of a forklift shined in his eyes (that’s never happened before). There were

many comebacks, and 'Just in Time' won Division 3. Special thanks to Maxime Suprenant (TTCAN Coach), who coached the boys in the Final.

It was a great 3 days, where Matthew played over 20 matches, gaining valuable competition experience.

It was a strong showing for Canada! In addition to the 'Just in Time' (BC, ON, MB) Division 3 victory, 'Quebec Junior Boys' were 2<sup>nd</sup> in Division 2, and 'Quebec Jr. Girls 1' were 2nd in Division 7.

Mark Lehmann Reporting