

BTTAD Chairman's Report 2010 -2011

Yet again, this has been a very successful year for the BTTAD and I am proud to have been chairman and played my part in what has been accomplished over the last few years and this last year in particular.. Membership is increasing steadily. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the members of the BTTAD to thank everyone who has helped the association in their work this year. Each contribution, no matter how small, helps move the Association forward. Increasing the volunteer basis will be very important if we are to continue to grow.

British Open 2011

I am pleased to report that the BTTAD will be staging a major international tournament at English Institute of Sport, Sheffield from Wednesday 14th to Saturday 17th September 2011. The BTTAD have appointed MLS Contracts Ltd (MLS) to be its Event Management Company for the British Open factor 40 at Sheffield in September 2011. MLS are a Sheffield based firm with vast experience in staging international events. They will be responsible for matters related to the infrastructure of the event working with the partners and the International Table Tennis Federation Para Division. BTTAD's partners in this event are UK Sport, Sheffield City Council and English Table Tennis Association (ETTA). The British Open Steering Group has been set up and meets every month. A very experienced quality team has been appointed to help MLS deliver the competition side of the event and other appointments are in hand.

BTTAD Meetings

BTTAD Committee meetings are proving very beneficial and the lively debate and expertise involved ensure that policies are very robust and well thought through. Shaun Newcomb has been an effective chair of the Selection Panel, with Dennis Beech joining Gorazd Vecko and Greg Baker as the other members. Louise Stotesbury has made the newsletter her own and Dennis Beech has organised both the Mencap Open and the BTTAD Nationals – both proving excellent events. Peter Taylor, Mike Smith and Karen Tonge MBE are the BTTAD representatives on the Performance Management Group, Karen replacing John Mackey who was unavailable due to work commitments-

BTTAD continue to improve our links with various bodies. Events such as the British Open have come about because of the work that we have done over the last few years. This has entailed attending numerous meetings all over the country, often during the weekday. BTTAD attendance at these meetings is important as it demonstrates our commitment and support and much of this work, by necessity, has fallen on myself and Mike Smith our secretary. ETTA, UK Sport, BPA, LOCOG, TASS and ESTTA are some of the bodies whose meetings we regularly attend. The officers of the BTTAD have established good working relations with these governing bodies and the continued feedback suggests that they see the BTTAD as an effective body and one they can trust and rely on to deliver.

World Class Programme

Appointing someone of the calibre of Gorazd Vecko to the post of Performance Director has been a major triumph for the BTTAD. UK Sport, our funders, have indicated how pleased they are with the progress that Disability Table Tennis has made since Beijing, both from the performance side and the governance of the programme. They continue to inform us that they feel that we are doing the right things and moving in the right direction. This is supported by the confirmation of the draft funding for 2011-2013 at a time of economic restraint

Learning Disability Inclusion of LD into the Paralympics in London 2012

It is clear that the BTTAD and its Performance Manager, Gorazd Vecko played a crucial role in the decision by Para ITTF to allow Learning Disability athletes into the table tennis programme at London 2012. Without this input from Gorazd and the support from BTTAD, the Para ITTF would certainly have not been confident that the classification process would have been robust enough and yet still be practical enough to avoid the problems that led to the Class 11 exclusion in the first place.

World Class Performance Squad

The BTTAD Selection Panel have reduced the size of the World Class Performance Squad from 24 to 15. This is in line with the elite policy of "no compromise" which basically means that funding had to be targeted

far more closely on those players who have Paralympic medal potential, mainly at London 2012. This policy has been accepted as the surest way to effectively target resources for medal success.

The Selection Panel was therefore faced with the very difficult task of deciding which players would be funded given that UK Sport only fund us for 14 places. . Our results at the Paralympics will play a major role in the decision for funding over the next four year period 2013-17. Diluting our resources would make high positions in the ranking list far more difficult. Also, another factor is that BPA will only select players who have a reasonable chance of medalling for 2012. Qualifying will not be good enough. Players have to show **by their results** and their commitment that if selected they have the realistic potential to win a medal

Those players that are now non - funded are still welcome to support the squad and train with the squad but at their expense and with the prior approval of the Head Coach,

Results for International Events

The highlight for the 13 strong British squad at the ITTF PARA TT World Championships recently held in Korea was the bronze medal for Jane Campbell and Sara Head in the Class 3 Women's Wheelchair Team event . They lost to Italy 1-3 (including two 9-11 fifth game losses) in the semi final before taking on France in the Play off for the Bronze medal . Jane and Sara won 3-2 with the doubles going their way 13-11 in the fifth. This is their first World medal. They won a European bronze last year.

To have 12 out of 13 reach the final stages was an excellent all round achievement for the squad. Eight quarter-final places and two semi-final places show we are getting closer to the top players and the target of 3-5 medals at London 2012 is achievable..

Development P2P – Playground to Podium

The P2P program has provided a good base for developing young talent and having 10 regional coordinators working 12 hours a week on disability is will obviously make a tremendous difference to the pathway that players can access all the way from beginners (Playground) to medallists at international events (Podium). Most are now in post and already making an impact. BTTAD is working closely with the ETTA through both the P2P and Regional Coaching Programme to help develop these pathways for disabled players in the regions

Tournaments

Tournaments this year have been well supported and of a high standard. The BTTAD National Championships continue to benefit from the Michael Hawkesworth' legacy. It is important to remind ourselves that this money can only be used for the National Championships and only if the event bears his name. it is vital that the these events continue to be supported by our players if we are to increase the competition circuit for disability table tennis.

Volunteer award

Congratulations to Shaun Newcomb who has been selected as the English Table Tennis Association's Equality Award winner in recognition of his achievements within disabled table tennis. He was presented with the award at the English Open .

Obituary

It is with great sadness that I have to report that John Welsh, From the West Midlands died on December 24th 2010 after a short illness. John was a regular participant in our disability events and has been involved with competitive table tennis for over 25 years. Playing in the wheelchair class 3, he was always a player to beat He will be greatly missed. Our condolences go to John's widow, Lisa .

Peter Taylor
Chairman BTTAD