



British Foosball Association

January Newsletter 2010

ROB ATHA INTERVIEWED



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Editorial

So we're starting another year!

There are some real highlights to look forward to with the ITSF World Cup this month in Nantes – Lets hope the team do us proud! The competition is held from January 7th to 10th – be sure to keep an eye on Britfoos and the ITSF website – www.table-soccer.org for full details of how the British (and Irish!) teams get on.

The British men's team are drawn with Germany, India and China, while the women have Cameroon, Japan and France. The juniors have a tough draw against France, Netherlands, Portugal and South Africa, while the single Group for the Senior event sees Britain play tough competition including Germany, France and the USA. Rob Atha has given a great interview in this newsletter where he discusses the UK Captaincy amongst many other fascinating insights.

Looking forward there aren't many tournaments currently in the calendar, here's hoping that Mase, Steve Lyall, Boris, Mayya Racy (and Jon May), Bill Donne, Keele Table Football and all the others who organised competitions in 2009 feel the urge to continue in 2010! The Liverpool Open will take place later in January, see the further details in this Newsletter.

Not enough thanks is given to those players who selflessly give up time and effort – often planning for months before hand to make these events happen. The BFA now has access to Garlando, Tornado and Roberto-Sport tables available for hire at ranking tournaments in the UK – for more details contact chair@britfoos.com.

A special mention to JP Thomson in London, who is putting an awful lot of effort into spreading the table football gospel – keeping current venues going, and organising competitions at new venues. It is notable that he is not only appealing to the current Foos community, but getting out and advertising to new areas and players. He runs very professional and fun tournaments - at the expense of not being able to take part himself – the sacrifice is much appreciated!

One recurring theme of the UK table football scene is the need to encourage local venues to take centre stage. The BFA Club membership has not so far been a noticeably successful innovation, while the BFA League has been in limbo for much of the last two years.

A priority for the whole of the UK Foos community – players, BFA committee, operators – must be to encourage the grass roots venues in the coming year. Only by continually refreshing and reinvigorating the scene will table football in the UK grow to the next level – on the bright side at least foosball isn't banned in the UK (see page 13 for details of Turkey's foosball ban!)

Finally, many thanks this year to Tom King, who has taken the website by the scruff of the neck, and gave it a long overdue overhaul and update!



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Rob Atha Interview

The Newsletter is privileged this month to get an interview with Rob Atha, the undisputed UK number 1 player for nearly 10 years. Rob broke onto the scene at the end of the 1990s, winning his first tournament at the Earl Haig in Hounslow at the age of 14 in 2000. Since then he has performed incredibly at national and international level, winning the ITSF World Championship doubles (with Joe Hamilton), and WCS events on Tecball and Bonzini.

Rob is also Captain and Selector of the UK national team, representing the country at the ITSF World Cup being held in Nantes in January 2010.

1. How did you get started playing?

I started playing foos due to my dad (Boris), we had a season ticket at Leeds and after the match we would go to his friends house Dimitri's who had an old Garlando and I would always want to play and get my ass kicked by both of them. I really got interested after a holiday in Kenya in 1998, I was beating everyone in the hotel, and when we got home, my dad started to look for places to play, then we found the Rainbow.

2. When you were beginning – who did you learn from the most?

At the start, I mainly learned from Dave Perrott, he helped me learn a snake, he taught me the basics, and from playing doubles with him, he made me realise about other options of the game, rather than just going long all the time. Also a big influence was Tanny, I respected his game the most and I used to hate playing him because he was so smart, he had the simplest 5 bar but very effective and by watching him and playing him every week, my game improved loads. The Rainbow back then was very competitive, because if you lost you would have to wait 45 mins to play again and every team was a regular pairing like: Tanny/Khalid, Eddy/benge, Stu/Boris, Les/Tony, Sohaib/Craig. But now everyone goes there for a laugh and nobody seems to care anymore.

3. I remember you winning your first open singles in Hounslow at one of Tich's tournaments (next to Hounslow West tube station IIRC) – what did that feel like as a 14 year old? Was it a shock, or did you feel that it was something that you could expect to do?

Tbh, I didn't expect it, it was awesome back then to win, as a 13-14 yr old I used to thrive on beating older players and embarrass them in front of their mates, I hated to lose, I still do but I can handle it now. At the time it was a shock, but after it came pressure of winning again, which motivated me more and more and that's when I started going abroad to play because I knew there were bigger challenges ahead.

4. When you first appeared on the scene you seemed to be very much a snake shooter – however you also have an awesome pull shot (from attack and defence). Was this something you always had in the armoury, or was it something that you developed when you were already a top player?

I started shooting a pull on the blocky Garlando because I found it hard to snake on them due to the small goals I didn't really understand the theory of picking holes back then, I just went long and long etc, then Dave taught me the fake/straight which made people jump, but I was guessing %100



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Interview

of the time and just used the speed of the shot to score. I always had the technique for the shot, I just developed the mental aspect behind the shot in time, now I barely shoot it on the 3, I haven't for 2-3 years as its too much effort and I prefer to score now with less effort.

5. How much time do you spend practicing now? And how much when you were younger, breaking through on the National and International scene?

I used to practice all the time, I would play Boris for 1-2 hours a day, plus go to the Rainbow 2 times a week, I couldn't play enough, always wanted more, after every tournament I would learn something new, albeit either a new pass, or shot, 1 big turning point for me was when all the Austrians came to Oxford, in 2000 I think, they had a different style, the tic tac and dummy shots which they used to great effect, Dave P studied Laszlo and saw how he was doing it, then he told me and I learned it and I used to love scoring it because the opponents hate it because it looks so easy. But I would say from 2005-2008 I didn't practice at all, I was playing tournaments every weekend on all the different tables so that was enough for me.

6. Do you have set practice routines like Joe has detailed previously on the forum and in the Newsletter, or do you just try whatever you fancy?

During practice I get really bored, I have no routines, I will play with the 5 for 5mins, then throw the ball around on the 2bar and try different shots. I don't think I could practice alone for more than 15 mins. If someone is there I would play against them, I much prefer that.

7. You are very naturally talented – but at what point did you feel that your mental game started to catch up with your skills?

Around 2005, I was living with Billy Pappas for a while and we studied other players and practiced different things, and just playing against him most of the time helped me loads as before I never practiced with someone who was better than me. so I was stuck at a certain level, I think I jumped up a level during that time.

8. You have had a number of different regular/ semi-regular partners (Your Dad, Dave Perrott, Juj Sohi, Joe Hamilton and many international players. How do you decide who you will play with at a tournament? Given a free choice would you play with Fred (Collignon) in every tournament and give yourself the best chance of winning, or would you prefer to play with anyone else, or would you prefer to always mix it up a little?

I always enjoy mixing it up, when I started I wanted to play with the best, Dave back then was one of the best defenders in the country, after a while I was good friends with Juj and he was always in the finals against us, so we struck a partnership then. In the UK for last few years, I don't really care who I play with; Me and Joe hit it off straight away plus he is in the top 3 in England, anyway. On the international scene, I would play with Fred anytime he wants, he is the best player ever and any chance to play with him and learn how he deals with things would only help my game to. But generally I like to mix it up because if you play with someone too much then its easier to argue and gets boring.



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Rob Atha Interview

9. The ITSF World Championship Doubles triumph with Joe stands out as being a highlight of your career – is this what you consider your best result or is it one of the others – for example: 2nd in the Garlando WCS with Joe against a very large very good field and winning the Tecball WCS Doubles with Tom Vandecauter beating Fred in the final – are ones that I think may have been even more difficult to achieve than the ITSF World Championship?

All of the above, winning the Austrian Nationals in 2003 was a big confidence booster for me as I beat Dalibor in the final, at the time he didn't lose for, like, 2 years. The other big one is getting to the final in 2004 Garlando Worlds in Singles. Winning with TomVdc at Tecball I still consider the best as we had to double dip Fred in his own country in the final.

But also getting to the final of OD at Garlando Worlds was massive as Joe made me enjoy foosball at that tournament, he was a Tornado forward playing Garlando goalie and he was feeding me the ball like a starving Kenyan. Everything about that event was awesome, was a good feeling.

Winning last year in Nantes was great but Fred/Billy not being there, and there being no prize money made it less prestigious for me. We had no hard games apart from the final to be honest, and that should have been 3-0 too. I think getting to the final of Singles at the Bonzini worlds was really difficult as I can hardly play on that table, I just used my experience to get the job done.

10. You started as very much a Tornado player, but had earlier international success on Garlando. What is your favourite table? What do you think of the more recent changes to the tables that have been made (e.g. Garlando goalposts and ball changes, Tornado 3 man goalie going to 1, Bonzini and Roberto-Sport ball changes) Are they for the good of the game, or should the tables be left alone to provide variety and uniqueness to each table?

I think they should leave each table as it is, it's stupid when they change it, Tornado is my favourite table as it's the only table in which my game doesn't feel limited to 1-2 things. On the other tables I have to break my game down and simplify it which brings my level down and makes it easier for players to play me.

11. You are always up for socialising at tournaments. (This is something that I think most players (old pros and noobs alike) really appreciate the chance to catch up and have a beer (or two) with you and chat about foos and life). Have you ever regretted a late night the next day when it has cost you a result against someone you felt you should beat, or do you see the tournament social experience as being something that you wouldn't want to miss out on for the sake of the odd additional win?

I love socialising at tournaments, I wouldn't change anything about my past if i could, I used to go to tournaments more for the good time and meeting friends rather than to go and win. Surprisingly some of my best results come from when I had no sleep the night before, when me and Tom won Tecball OD, I had 1-2 hours sleep the night before and I drank about 13 beers throughout the day. lol.



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12. What was the best tournament you ever went to from the social side?

Jeesh, there have been loads, Vegas is always up there, any tournament where Martin Fritsche was there as he makes a boring tournament into a good time. I used to love the Austrian tournaments when I was 17-20, as they all drank loads and partied until they were calling matches the next day. Over time I have realised that the Poles/Austrians drink the most and would recommend all of their tournaments if you are looking to have fun. The best social tournament has to be Lodz 2007 in Poland, Garlando, me and Kane went there and got really drunk and that tournament holds the funniest memories for me.

13. And from the organisational side – which tournament was the most professional you have ever played in?

The Bonzini worlds every year is always the best organised. They make it look professional and are a level above the rest. It's just a shame about the players there. I'm saying no more.

14. What is your worst moment at a tournament?

My lowest feeling, and where my confidence was lowest was during Dallas this year in OD, it was the most important for me and I just couldn't perform. Sorry Brandon.

That same feeling I had in Germany in 2006 on Lehmacher at there tournament, I lost everything on the Saturday, in AD, OM, OD. But on both occasions I did really well in singles the next day.

15. You have a lot of experience of tournaments in different countries - what little things can be done to UK tournaments do to make them better (without spending loads of money / time)?

For me, the UK tournaments are fine, bring back the 1 day tournaments and decrease the amount of events to 6, OD, OS, SPD, SPS, NS, ND. I really don't like tournaments over running on the Sunday. It's cheaper to everyone involved.

16. Who do you think is the most naturally talented player (from any country) you have ever played?

That's easy, Billy Pappas. He can do things people don't even know about.

17. You are Captain and Selector of the National team – what does this mean to you? Is it a headache of worrying that you will make the right decisions, or that people will be upset if they are left out – or is it something that you enjoy as it gives you the chance to use tactical selections and advice to try and squeeze a win in a tightly fought international match?

Its a honour for me to be the captain, most of the time the team picks itself, so on the hard ones I talk to the other players on the team and see what they think. This year was the biggest headache I have had, as there was 4 or 5 players for the last 2 spots. I am excited this year as everyone knows their position in the team, a more simple format makes selection easier.

18. Which pairings are you thinking of for the World Cup? Who do you see as making a good pairing – are you looking for players that can swop or are you picking them specifically as attackers



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and defenders?

As its a short format I'm gonna pick an Attacker with a Defender, the main reason behind this is that the players should feel more comfortable knowing their role. If it was different the players would play a little different and play with a different pressure and try and hide behind a player in the team rather than taking responsibility in the match and making things happen.

19. And who will you be looking to for crunch singles matches?

Every match is a crunch one, everything counts, so whoever is called upon should give their best.

20. As captain and best player – what can you do to help other players in the British team? Do you advise them on their strengths and weaknesses and what tactics to try in different circumstances, or do you offer less technical advice and encouragement?

I will do anything which I feel will help us. Before the German match I will give advice about the strengths and weaknesses of the players we will play, I think its most important for us to be aggressive because when your aggressive the chance of lucky goals is higher, plus it puts fear into the opponents and it shows confidence. Body language is huge, we have to show everyone that we are there to win and be afraid of nobody.

21. What do you think of the BFA? What do they do well and what do they do badly?

I will support the BFA of course, I can't really criticise them because they are trying to make things happen rather than sitting and waiting for things to happen. I think to generate more income they should advertise more, in Germany there are 10 or more players who have their own website and they do exhibitions nearly every weekend for like 1-2000 Euros, they take a table there and perform and put on a show. Surely, if the BFA hired 1-2 good players to do the same and take a big cut of the money then everything's good.

22. Would you ever consider standing for committee yourself?

No in the near future, but who knows.

23. What would you like to see done in the UK game to take it forward? If you were chair of the BFA for one day what change would you make?

Firstly, try and get some sort of sponsorship and make a tour like P4P is doing in Germany, they have 10-12 tournaments a year with 5K prize money at every one. So I would get in touch with whoever the president is in the P4P and pick their brains on how they did it.

24. What are your plans for the coming year(s)? Do you see yourself continuing to globe trot playing foos, or will this have to end as real life intervenes and bills and mortgages etc become a reality. (Don't do it is my advice – I still want to go back to serving burgers and fries...)

Well continue as I am, going to the big tournaments hopefully, I have bills and rent to pay so I can't go to as many tournaments as I would like, but the ones I go to, I will try and win and do my best. I'm just looking forward to Nantes, lets get behind the team and do the country proud!



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Liverpool Open

29th-31st January 2010

**Rileys Liverpool Grand Central
Bolton Street Liverpool L3 5LX**

12-13x Garlando Tables

ITSF Pro-Tour status confirmed

Provisional Schedule

Friday 29th Jan

6pm Registration

8pm Novice Doubles (Beginners)

9pm DYP (draw your partner)

Saturday 30th Jan

10am Registration

10.30am Events continue

11am Semi-Pro Singles*

11am Amateur Singles*

12 noon Senior Singles

1pm Open Singles

2pm Senior Doubles

3pm Womens Singles

4pm Novice Singles

5pm Semi-Pro Doubles

7pm Al Volo Open Doubles (NEW)

Sunday 31st Jan

11am Events Continue

11.30am Open Doubles

12.30am Amateur Doubles

1pm Junior Singles

1.30pm Womens Doubles

2pm Pro-Am Doubles

3pm Junior Doubles

4pm Mixed Doubles



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Entry & Table Fee Package Deals

Men – Pro-Master £50, Pro £40, Semi-Pro £40, Amateur £30, Novice £20

Pro-Master/Pro Packages include: Open Singles, Open Doubles, Pro-Am, Mixed doubles

Semi-Pro Package includes: Open Singles, Open Doubles, Semi-Pro Singles Semi-Pro Doubles, Pro-Am, Mixed doubles

Amateur Package includes: Open Singles, Open Doubles, Pro-Am, Mixed doubles, Amateur Singles, Semi-Pro Doubles, Amateur Doubles

Novice Package Includes: : Open Singles, Open Doubles, Pro-Am, Amateur Singles, Semi-Pro Doubles, Amateur Doubles: Novice Doubles, Novice Singles

Women – Pro-Master £15, Pro £12, Semi-Pro £10, Amateur £7, Novice £4

Package adds Womens Singles, Womens Doubles to basic package

Add £10 (£5 Novices) for players entering women singles/doubles & mixed only

Juniors - (Born 1992 or later) receive half-price package deals including Junior events

Junior Sunday Package £5 – Junior Singles, Junior Doubles, Amateur Doubles, Novice Singles & table fee *Package deals do not include DYP, Senior Singles/Doubles, or Al Volo Doubles

Entry Fees (per player per event)

Event Pro-Master Pro Semi-Pro Amateur Novice

DYP £5 £5 £5 £5 £5

Senior Singles £5 £5 £5 £5 £5

Senior Doubles £5 £5 £5 £5 £5

Semi-Pro Singles* n/a n/a £10 £10* £10*

Amateur Singles* n/a n/a n/a £6 £4

Open Singles £20 £15 £10 £6 £4

Womens Singles £10 £10 £8 £5 £3

Open Doubles £20 £15 £10 £6 £4

Semi-Pro Doubles n/a n/a £10 £6 £4

Novice Singles n/a n/a n/a n/a £2

Novice Doubles n/a n/a n/a n/a £2

Amateur Doubles n/a n/a n/a £6 £4

Womens Doubles £10 £10 £7 £5 £3

Pro-Am Doubles £5 £5 £5 £5 £5

Mixed Doubles £5 £5 £5 £5 £5

Junior Singles £5 £5 £5 £2 £1

Junior Doubles £5 £5 £5 £2 £1

Al Volo Doubles £5 £5 £5 £5 £5

* Eligible players must choose between semi-pro singles and amateur singles, amateurs wishing to enter semi-pro singles must pay difference in entry fee.

Table Fees

Tables are on freeplay, a table fee of £10 (£5 for Sunday only) is levied on all participants (table fee is included in package deals). Exceptions – players entering ONLY novice doubles OR Junior Singles/Doubles pay £1 per player per event



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Prize Funds

Prize funds will be 80% of entry fees (balance covers trophies, advance costs, registration fees and other expenses), except for Junior and Novice events which are for trophies only. The distribution will vary depending on turnout in each event using the standard BFA formula (rounded to nearest £5 if over £30, otherwise to nearest £1).

Eligibility

All players must provide full details and be registered with the BFA as provisional or full members before competing. Registration/membership available on-site.

All Pro and Pro-master players are obliged to observe the ITSF Dress code (sports dress, no denim)

– All players are strongly encouraged to observe the dress code. Failure to observe the code could result in you forfeiting your match or being expelled from the tournament.

Open Singles/Open Doubles – any player

Semi-Pro Singles/Semi-Pro Doubles - Any player ranked semi-pro or below in BFA Garlando Rankings; Any overseas player who fulfils all of the following criteria

- less than 500 points on the Internationale Garlando Rangliste and not otherwise ranked 'pro' in the IGR

- a total of under 100 'open' points (singles + doubles) in ITSF rankings

- not ranked Master or Elite in P4P rankings,

- not ranked Pro Elite in FFFT Classement Generale

- not ranked Pro-Master in VIFA or European Tornado Rankings

- not a player in National or 1st Regional league (BE/NL)

Amateur Singles/Amateur Doubles - Any player ranked Amateur or below in BFA Garlando Rankings

Any overseas player resident in the UK who is not ranked semi-pro or equivalent in another jurisdiction

Novice Singles/Novice Doubles - Any player ranked Novice in the BFA Garlando Rankings

Any unranked UK National or UK-resident player

Junior Singles/Junior Doubles – Any player born on or after 1-1-1992 – ID required

Senior Singles/Senior Doubles – Any player born in 1959 or earlier – ID required

Pro-Am Doubles - Novice players can partner any other player

Amateur players can partner any player who is not Pro-master

Semi-Pro Players can partner any player who is not Pro or Pro-Master

Pro Players can partner any Amateur or Novice player

Pro-Master Players must partner a Novice player

DYP – Any Player

Al Volo Doubles – Any Player – Traditional Italian rules, no more than one touch allowed per rod, fast and furious play guaranteed!

Womens Singles/Womens Doubles – any female player

Mixed Doubles – Any male player plus any female player

Important Note – Any event with fewer than 3 entries will be cancelled!!!



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Liverpool Open

Travelling by Rail

Liverpool is served by Liverpool Lime Street Station with direct services to London Euston and connections from all over the UK. Check out <http://www.thetrainline.com> for timetables and ticket prices. Lime Street Station is less than 3 minutes walk to the venue, with Liverpool Central 5 minutes walk dealing with local/regional lines. On foot, exit Lime Street to the left hand side of the concourse, turn at the bottom along Lime Street (or directly on to Bolton street from the side entrance) and take 1st left up Copperas Hill. Venue is 100 yards up the hill on your left.

Travelling by Road

Enter Liverpool via the M62/Edge Lane corridor and follow signs for 'City Centre' and then signs for 'Lime Street Station'. Venue is approx 200m south of the station complex. The venue is on the corner of Bolton Street and Copperas Hill. For those entering the city via the M53/Wallasey tunnel, follow 'City Centre' direction (right lane) out of the tunnel, then stay in middle lane when approaching the city centre, turn left at roundabout for Birkenhead tunnel, get into the right lane and turn right at the set of traffic lights at the top of the hill, follow Lime St and take second left after the station, the venue is 100m on the left.

Parking

There is only time-limited daytime street parking available near the venue with very sharp traffic wardens even at weekends – this is Liverpool City Centre! There are public car parks in Mount Pleasant (around 300m away) and at the top of Copperas Hill allowing attractive all-day rates, the car park on Bolton Street next to the venue is expensive and closes at tea-time, or St John's Shopping Centre (but check closing times). Use of Public Transport is strongly recommended. There is an all day £5 car park 10 minutes walk away on the corner of Hope St and Hardman St. The venue is located on the corner of Bolton Street and Copperas Hill

Flying to Liverpool

Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LPL) has excellent connections to cities throughout Europe, being a hub for several Budget airlines. Booking early is recommended for the cheapest flights. Do NOT fly to Stansted!! It is at the other end of the country with very poor transport links!!

Accommodation

Liverpool is a major European city, and has a range of hotels to suit all budgets. The list below is not exhaustive but includes most places within walking distance of the tournament venue. Listed prices are from 2008 and subject to change.

See:

<http://forum.britfoos.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=7976>

for full and latest details



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Keele Open Results:

28th-29th November 2009

Open Doubles

1. Hamilton, Joe Atha, Rob
2. Burdett, Tom May, Jonathan
3. Yeung, Simon Lyall, Stephen

Womens Doubles

1. Brice, Sarah Ramlee, Hannah
2. Brice, Amy Walding, Jody
3. Lasecka, Olga Knox, Emily

Pro Doubles

1. Lyall, Christopher Kingston, Dan
2. Yeung, Simon Davey, Rob
3. Addison, Graeme Haigh, Chris

Mixed Doubles

1. Atha, Rob Lasecka, Olga
2. Knox, Emily Ziemann, David
3. Potts, Richard Brice, Sarah

Amateur Doubles

1. Kay, Rob Knox, Emily
2. Pearson, Brodie Burlakov, Stanislav
3. Mandebvu, Albert Tapomwa, Richard

Senior Doubles

1. Ziemann, David Haddon, Christopher
2. Atha, Boris Harris, Martyn

Novice Doubles

1. Wooldridge, Andrew Brookin, Andy
2. Wheeler, Steve Hasham, Daaim
3. Mandebvu, Albert Tapomwa, Richard

Junior Doubles

1. Brice, Amy Khandehelmal, Ankush
2. Cordle, Stephen Ally, Aaron

Handicap Doubles

1. Potts, Richard Brice, Sarah
2. Hamilton, Joe Ziemann, David
3. Lasecka, Olga Atha, Rob

Open Singles

1. Atha, Rob
2. Shovelton, John
3. May, Jonathan

Womens Singles

1. Lasecka, Olga
2. Brice, Sarah
3. Ramlee, Hannah

Pro Singles

1. Bicki, Lukasz
2. Davey, Rob
3. Kingston, Dan

Pro Singles Plate

1. Yeung, Simon
2. Nubbett, Thomas
3. Atha, Boris

Amateur Singles

1. Kay, Rob
2. Khandehelmal, Ankush
3. Willetts, Tom

Senior Singles

1. Atha, Boris
2. Ziemann, David
3. Harris, Martyn

Novice Singles

1. Khandehelmal, Ankush
2. Edge, Matt
3. Henkes, Philip

Junior Singles

1. Khandehelmal, Ankush
2. Brice, Amy



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Foosball Ban In Turkey – Errol Tez

Errol Tez played foosball in Turkey between 1959 and 1968 (the year of ban) and attained a high skill level. He graduated with an MSc from Technical University of Istanbul in 1969. He undertook PhD studies at University of Birmingham, and then moved to Loughborough University, where he was an academic staff until his retirement. He is now a visiting professor at De Montfort University and is continuing with his R&D efforts in electronic engineering. He has four children, the youngest being only a year old. He wishes to take up foosball again as a means of perpetual rejuvenation. He has recently made contact with the Britfoos community and has made guest appearances around the country already.

It is strange but true: In Turkey, a country aspiring to become a full member of the EU, public play of foosball is illegal even in sport clubs, societies etc. (with the exception of certain touristic establishments). Besides, importing as well as native production of foosball tables have been banned. In contrast, many countries relatively less-developed than Turkey have their own Foosball Associations that are members of the ITSF.

From Europe, the foosball game reached the USA just after the 2nd World War, mainly from Germany via the US Army personnel stationed there. In early 50s, during the rise of the Cold War, Turkey joined NATO, and then everything in Turkey started getting americanised. Effectively, foosball came to Turkey from Europe but it was via the USA.

In early and mid-50s, the war-torn mainland Europe was simply recuperating and was almost non-existent as a sphere of global influence. The first foosball tables, together with Pin-Ball machines, were imported to Turkey from the USA and then from Europe, but imports were expensive. Consequently, native producers in Turkey developed a foosball table, copied from the foreign tables but adapted to the production capabilities of the country at the time. (However, they could not copy Pin-Ball machines, which continued to be imported.) This native table, now extinct but deeply longed for by many, combined very high level of ball control with fast speed, and permitted a variety of shots which are difficult, or even impossible, to execute on modern tables.

From mid-50s to late 60s, foosball became a big craze in Turkey, with possibly well over 100,000 players of all skill levels but mostly the youth (from secondary school children to middle-age adults). In early to late 60s, there were native foosball tables everywhere, in cafes, bars, Luna parks etc., and numerous game salons dedicated to foosball existed in many localities, with some salons containing up to 20 tables permanently.

The new Constitution of Turkey in 1961 opened up the country to a more democratic and active social and political life. However, this big foosball craze drew some reaction from the conservative, reactionary circles, with complaints like school children playing truant for the sake of foosball. In early 60s, owing to the strengthening of German economy, first Turkish immigrant workers started flowing into Germany. This flow continued for almost three decades, and among those immigrant workers were some highly-skilled foosball players. Thus, the foosball circle: from Germany to USA, from USA



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Foosball Ban In Turkey – Errol Tez

to Turkey, from Turkey to Germany, became complete. Now, within the 2nd and 3rd generation Turkish workers in Germany, there are some top-level foosball players.

The peaceful movements (hippies, flower-power etc.) of the early 60s gradually turned into a politically very active, revolutionary and even extremist/anarchist stage in the Europe of late 60s, especially in Germany. Anti-American actions spread across Europe mainly via students' activities like occupation of university buildings and demand of socio-political 'change'. Similar activities also started in Turkey from 1968 onwards, by when progressive Turkish youth had already become politically aware and educated. Protest marches on streets became frequent occurrence, and the country started sliding into a division of 'rightists' and 'leftists'.

In 1968, when extremist activities (like those of "Baader-Meinhof Group") led Germany to a crisis, the conservative Turkish Government of the time passed a legislation banning foosball from all public places in Turkey. This was in the pretence of considering foosball tables and pin-ball machines to be potential means of gambling. Although it was never explicitly or publicly stated, a reason behind this legislation was to prevent youth from gathering in large numbers in public places so as to limit sources of the social unrest then existed

In the following two decades (70s and 80s), Turkey experienced an extremist, terrorist state of affairs internally. The interest in foosball faded away almost to non-existence and a stigma of low esteem became associated with the game. Only a small number of die-hard foosball lovers continued playing in semi-covert, sheltered places to which authorities turned a blind eye. Since the turn of the Millennium, foosball is gaining popularity in Turkey mainly via the efforts of some modern youth who have re-discovered the game. These people are now the promoters of the web sites like:

<http://www.langirt.org>,

<http://www.langirt.gen.tr>,

<http://www.langirtciyiz.biz>,

[http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4 ... 3413193..1](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4...3413193..1))

The bill passed in 1968 stipulated non-suspendable sentences and effectively made foosball a worse crime in Turkey than many others like theft. In 2008, the original 1968 Act was amended to comply with the recently updated Turkish Criminal Law. However, the amended Act of 2008 still refers to legislation that is no longer in existence. It is time that this antiquated law was repealed altogether.

Turkey is a democratic, secular republic but still suffers from varying degrees of economic and social turbulence, including terrorism and issues on human rights. Within this background, abolition of foosball ban may seem like a drop in the ocean. Nonetheless, such drops merging together form a tributary to the main flow of social progress.



January Newsletter 2010

Reading Open Results: 7th-8th November 2009

Open Doubles

- 1 Shovelton, John Davey, Rob
- 2 Nubbet, Mark Nubbet, Andrew
- 3 Shovelton, Alex Morgan, David

Open Singles

- 1 May, Jonathan
- 2 Shovelton, Alex
- 3 Burdett, Tom

Womens Doubles

- 1 Racy Mayya & Darragh Alina
- 2 Ramlee Hannah & Cieslik Marta
- 3 Cutcliffe Samantha & Williams Marian

Womens Singles

- 1 Ramlee Hannah
- 2 Racy Mayya
- 3 Darragh Alina

Semi-Pro Doubles

- 1 Tari, Jozsef Zakowski, Greg
- 2 Cutcliffe, Phil Williams, Phil
- 3 Nubbet, Mark Ramlee, Hannah

Amateur Singles

- 1 Mesumbe, Eddie
- 2 Willetts, Tom
- 3 Donne, Bill

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