

Chapter 1 - Beginnings

Our family's entry into the world of ping-pong was the result of the occurrence of one of those seemingly insignificant events that wind up changing the course of one's life:

Mort: *The year was 1965. Ev and I were relaxing in bed. It was past ten in the evening. She was reading the newspaper and I had my head stuck in a book. Both boys were asleep. Jeff, the oldest, was eight and Chuck had just turned four.*

"Mort, listen to this," Evelyn said, "there's going to be a ping-pong tournament next month in Hempstead. Why don't we join?"

I replied that I wasn't interested, but added, "If you want to enter, I think you should. I'll watch, and carry your trophy home for you."

Now you must understand, all during our courtship and marriage, anywhere we went, if there was a ping-pong table around, Ev would play. And, I had never seen her lose.

"Look, Mort," she said. "You're such a talented athlete, you can play any sport and do it well. What we'll do is clear off the table downstairs and I'll teach you. You'll be great in no time."

She had said those magic words, talented athlete. I agreed, but only after we made a pact that we would practice every night on the table in our basement until the tournament.

And we did. By the time the tournament started, I had progressed to the point that I had beaten Ev a couple of times. Well, I had this amazing dream. Ev would win the Women's Singles, I'd win the Men's, and together we'd win the Mixed Doubles.

Up until that time, I had never seen a real table tennis match. Boy, was I in for a surprise. The tournament that we entered was called the Long Island Open, meaning that anyone could enter, as long as you were a member of the United States Table Tennis Association. We joined up when we got to the event. I was amazed to find players from as far away as Vermont, Michigan, and North Carolina. Can you imagine? People traveled all that way just to play ping-pong! The tournament started on Friday night and continued through Saturday and Sunday.

I was scheduled to play at ten on Saturday morning, and Ev was to start about an hour later. Our mixed doubles match was set for Sunday morning.

It didn't take long for me to be knocked out of the tournament. I lost quickly, 21-2, 21-3. I got my five points only because my opponent missed five times. I hadn't even broken a sweat. I went to watch Ev play. She lost also, but it was a good match, 21-18, 21-19.

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We were playing with rackets that had been out of style for many years. They were covered with hard pimped rubber, and could be bought for a dollar or two. Technology had changed the sport. The new “sandwich” rackets had a smooth surface covering a thin layer of sponge rubber, and could produce a tremendous amount of spin.

After our losses, we sat around, watched some of the better players and talked to people about the game.

The next day we were called to play our mixed doubles match. Our opponents were the first-seeded team - Errol Resek, who was one of the top ten players in the country, and his sister Priscilla, who was one of the top five women in the United States. Both Priscilla and Errol were born in the Dominican Republic. Well, it was a slaughter. If I was lucky enough to get my racket on the ball, it flew any which way except on the table. When we finished the match, Priscilla said to Ev in her broken English, “You better than heem!”

Nobody can do that to me, I said to myself. I’ll show them. So we bought new sandwich rackets, joined a club, and practiced. Slowly we began to improve. About six months later we played in the Long Island Closed, a tourney limited to residents of Long Island. Would you believe it, my first match was against the guy I had played in the first tournament. Well, I beat him, and two years later I played him again. And would you believe it, I killed him, 21-2, 21-3. He got his five points only because I missed five times.

Chapter 2 - Evelyn's Story

Evelyn, who introduced all of us to the sport, tells the story of how she learned to play:

Evelyn: *I started to play table tennis in the basement of my Hewlett home, in the year 1940. I was 9 years old. My uncle, Sam Gold, played quite well and knew the rules, which my mother [Henrietta Margolin] and I learned from him. Our homemade table was constructed from 2 pieces of plywood that sat on four horses. I played just about every day after school with my friend Lila Katz, who lived across the street. We played together for many years, and both became quite good at the game. Today, Lila lives next-door to my brother Jess [Margolin] and his wife Toni.*

After graduating high-school, I studied Art Education at Syracuse University, and spent a lot of time playing against the guys at the student union, most of whom I could beat.

Mort and I married in 1954, and moved to our new house in Woodmere in 1960. When my mother and I were planning the house, I made sure that there would be room for a ping-pong table. Table tennis was always very important to me, and even though we weren't playing then, we brought the homemade table from my mother's house, and put it in our new basement. It was used solely as a storage shelf, until we entered our first tournament.



1973: Evelyn finishes second in the Long Island Closed Women's Singles competition. Dave Cox, LITTA President, presents her with the trophy.

Chapter 3 - Learning to Play

Now that Mort and Ev had caught the “fever”, they needed a place to play, to improve, to face new competition. The first club they attended met on Sunday nights at the Far Rockaway YMHA. The club offered individual league play, in which each player was placed in a group with other players of similar ability. Earn the best record in your group, and you would be promoted next week to a higher-ranking group. The following year they started bringing me along as well. In 1968, we were joined by 6-year-old Chuck, who could now see over the table.

In 1969, Evelyn and Mort joined Danny Ganz’s club at the Rockville Centre Recreation Center, which had play on Thursday nights. Danny was an insider in the Long Island Table Tennis Association, and wrote a monthly column on the Long Island scene for *Table Tennis Topics*. That year, our name, spelled incorrectly, began to find its way into his column as we began to be noticed by the elders of Long Island table tennis.

In September, the Far Rockaway club will arrange to have a new type of tournament—a Class “B” tournament for all players in Nassau, Suffolk and Queens.

No player in the top fifty will be allowed to enter. Top seed will be Marty Ackerman in the “A” group and little Jeff Zackerin in the “B” group. Trophies will be awarded for both events, along with prizes for the most outstanding player and for the best sport. Get

NOW THAT we are all looking forward to the fall season, the Far Rockaway club will hold a sanctioned tournament for Class “B” and below players. There will be five groups, with trophies awarded the four winners of each group. We think the tourney will take place October 5th at Far Rockaway YMHA. Get your entry blanks in early. Now is the time for the Klars, Zackerins, Lampells, and all the other seasoned veterans to pick up trophies.

Note the incorrect spelling of the name Zakarin.
 Danny Ganz, Topics, June 1969 and July 1969

Four years ago we predicted that Gary Adelman would win a national tournament. We’re going out on the proverbial limb again. We now predict that one of the Zakarin mighty mites will win a Nationals. We aren’t sure if it will be eleven-year-old Jeff or seven-year-old Chuck. We are sure it won’t be forty-umptein-year-old Mort.

This time with correct spelling, Danny Ganz predicts the future.
 Topics, December 1969

FAMILY PONG

When the Far Rockaway club closed, Chuck and I were left without a place to play, as the Rockville Centre club didn't allow children to participate. So the four of us started making the hour-long trek to the Huntington club on Wednesday nights. That tiring weekly journey to far-off Huntington motivated us, in 1972, to open a club in our own neighborhood, at the Woodmere Junior High School.

By 1969, however, it was already clear to us that if we wished to seriously improve our games, we would have to play against the best available competition. For that, we were told, one would have to venture into "the City" – to the 73rd Street Club in New York, which was the table tennis home of many of America's best players.

Chapter 4 - Consolation

Evelyn, by the way, was the first one of us to win a real prize at a real competition. A beautiful trophy, with a metal plate attached at the bottom inscribed with the words:

**Long Island Closed
Women's Consolation
1967 Runner-Up**

In the 1960s and 1970s, the typical table tennis tournament offered competition at various levels: The showcase events – Men's Singles, Women's Singles, Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles – for the top players, Junior and Senior events for the under- and over-aged, and the "Classification" events... for the rest of us. Class "A", Class "B", Class "C" – these events allowed average players to perhaps win a few matches without fear of being quickly eliminated in the first round by some crack right-hander who could probably beat them with his left as well.

In addition, some tournaments also offered "Consolation" events for first-round losers in the Men's and Women's Singles. Indeed, it was a welcome bit of consolation for us beginners to get in another game or two before being sent packing.

So, there it was, Evelyn's first trophy, our first trophy, which was promptly placed on display on the top of the piano in our living room. Later on, we would come to regard a second-place finish in a consolation event as a sad sort of joke, but in 1967, we couldn't have been prouder.

A year later, I was awarded my first trophy, which I received from the Far Rockaway Club: "Most Improved Player - 1968", it read. It was placed on the piano, together with the trophies that Ev had won. I dusted them every week. Years later, we had amassed a collection of over 300 trophies, and they sat 3-deep on shelves built especially for this purpose in our den. They collected lots of dust.

LONG ISLAND CLOSED MAY 12, 1968

M/S F: T. Boggan d. E. Resek 19, 10, 17. 1/2: Boggan d. G. Braithwaite 14, -13, 15, 12; Resek d. H. Green 5, 14, 20. 1/4: Boggan d. J. Andrews 17, 9, 9; Resek d. S. Lasser -19, 16, 16, 9; Braithwaite d. H. Deutsch 10, 13, 16; Green d. H. Liedtke 15, 15, 15.

M/D F: Resek-Braithwaite d. T. Boggan-M. Silbert -19, 17, 15, 19. 1/2: Resek-Braithwaite d. S. Klein-C. Freund 19, 9, 10; Boggan-Silbert d. E. Heith-H. Leidtke 14, 13, -14, -11, 10.

W/S F: M. DeSouza d. A. Green 18, 12, -16, -18, 10. 1/2: DeSouza d. M. Burnett -14, 18, 10, -20, 14; Green d. E. Leonhardt 19, 14, 14.

W/D F: DeSouza-Burnett d. Leon Hardt-V. Livins -11, 12, 20, 13.

S/S F: H. Deutsch d. P. Hadland -10, 15, 21, 25. 1/2: Deutsch d. S. Jacobs 16, 13, -16, 18; Hadland d. D. Mandel -13, -12, 16, 15, 11.

S/D F: M. Silbert-Jacobs d. Lieber-Mandel 13, 12, 14.

B-17 F: C. Freund d. S. Klein -16, 17, -19, 13, 21. 1/2: Freund d. R. Shur 15, 13, 16; Klein d. W. Steinroeder -20, 19, -13, 11, 17.

G-17 F: A. Green d. M. Sommer 10, 12, 11.

Jr.-15 F: C. Freund d. G. Adelman 16, 20, 21. 1/2: Freund d. Leonhardt 23, 15, 21; Adelman d. J. McGraw 19, 15, 18.

Jr.-13 F: Adelman d. McGraw 15, 11, 8.

Cl.A F: D. Banach d. S. Jacobs 9, -16, -14, 16, 15. 1/2: Banach d. E. Heith 18, 13, -16, 11; Jacobs d. S. Lassar 18, -15, -20, 22, 16.

Cl.A/D F: Lasser-Resek d. McGraw-W. Miller 17, 15, 16.

Cl.B F: W. Bobb d. C. Freund 12, 14, -14, 17, 16. 1/2: Bobb d. L. Butcher 21, 16, 19; Freund d. G. Adelman 16, -18, 19, -15, 13.

X/D F: Braithwaite-Burnett d. Boggan-Leonhardt -13, 14, 4, 14. 1/2: Braithwaite-Burnett d. J. Andrews-Desouza 8, 14, 17; Boggan-Leonhardt d. Green-Green 16, 10, 17.

M/Consol. F: J. Klein d. S. Jacobs.

W/Consol. RR: Winner: E. Fuller 3-0; Runnerup: E. Zakarin 2-1.

Wheelchair/S F: J. Ebert d. A. Bugan 15, 17.

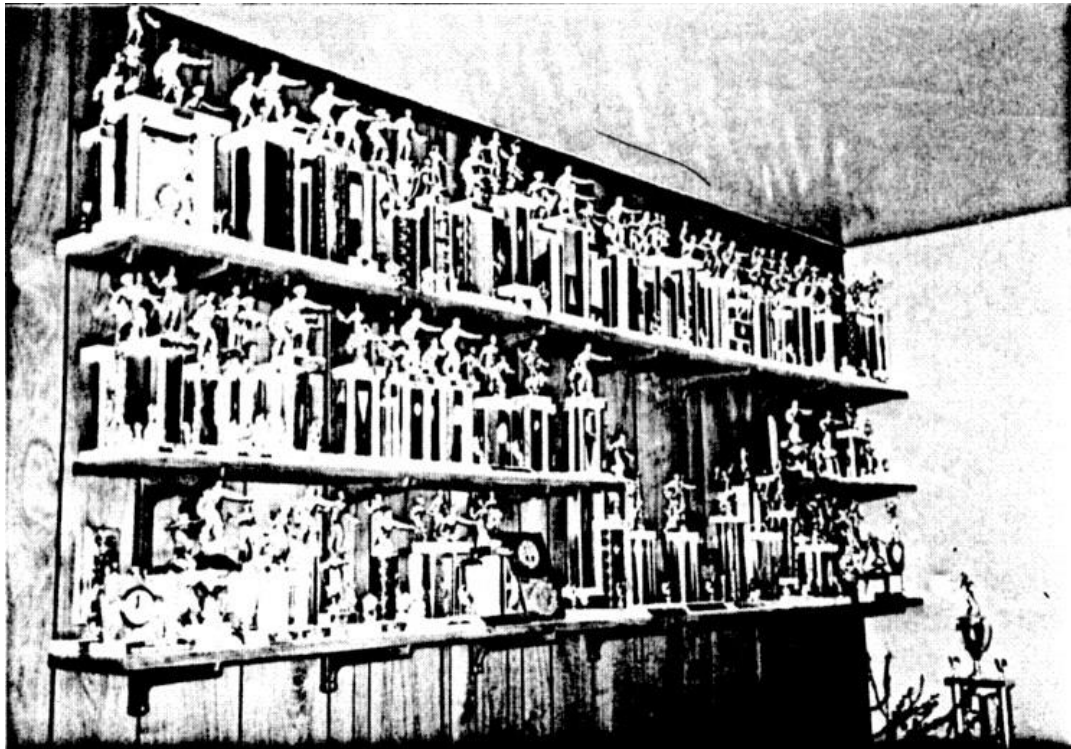
Ev finishes second in the Women's Consolation event (see second line from bottom).

Our first mention in Table Tennis Topics, July 1968

FAMILY PONG



1970: Our piano served as our first trophy shelf.
Jeff is to the left, Chuck is on the right.



1976: 300 awards later. Most of the awards were displayed on the shelves on the trophy wall in our den.

Chapter 5 - Tiny Terror

One of the more difficult decisions that my parents had to face during these early years was what to do with Chuck, their now 7-year-old son. Mort and Evelyn were improving steadily and hungry for further competition, and I, at age 11, was showing signs of becoming a serious competitor. This meant that we would need to travel more extensively, beyond the realm of the twice-a-year Long Island Open and Closed. And what about Chuck? Despite his age, it seemed like a reasonable decision to let him compete. After all, he certainly *wanted* to play. So they let him.

One of Chuck's first competitions was the 1969 New York Summer Open, which was held at the 73rd Street Club in Manhattan.

Mort: *We arrived at the club, which was in the basement of the [later to be demolished] Riverside Plaza Hotel on 73rd Street. Having heard that this was the pinnacle of New York table tennis, I couldn't believe my eyes. Smelly, filthy, undersized playing area, poor lighting, and a bathroom that looked like it hadn't been cleaned, ever. Over in one corner, a card game was going on. What made it worse, kids still in their teens were playing poker with men in their thirties and forties. I was ready to ask for my entry fee back and head for our home in the suburbs.*

In any case, we stayed. Tim Boggan, not yet the editor of *Table Tennis Topics*, was running the tournament operations desk. "Well done, young Zakarin!" he would greet me, as I had won another match. Later, Tim approached Mort to propose that in the Boys Under 13 Singles, Chuck would play in the first round against Tim's 6-year-old son, Eric, who was playing in his first tournament. Mort agreed, and the boys started to play. The match immediately started drawing attention, not only because of Chuck's and Eric's diminutive size, but also because of the level of volume being generated. The two of them were screaming, cursing, and throwing their rackets. Eric won, but the results were inconsequential. The boys had made a name for themselves, and Chuck had earned himself the nickname, "Tiny Terror".

In the wake of Chuck's matches with Eric and others, Mort and Ev were subject to a lot of second-guessing regarding their decision to let Chuck compete, both in Table Tennis circles, and from within the family. But the facts were already in place – the family was competing, and Chuck was competing, and it was too late to change anything. Besides, something positive had come of all this – Chuck and Eric had developed a genuine friendship that would be

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renewed every few weeks at the next tournament. How they enjoyed each other's companionship! Running around the tournament site, under the bleachers, in the hotel, playing trampoline on the beds, pressing all the buttons in the elevator.

In addition, Chuck and Eric began to play together as a doubles team. Chuck was a left-hander with a nice forehand topspin, while Eric, a right-hander, complemented him with a good block and smash. They would be the center of attention for a long time to come.



Tim Boggan, photo from 1990s.



**Chuck, in a quiet moment.
Topics, January/February 1970**

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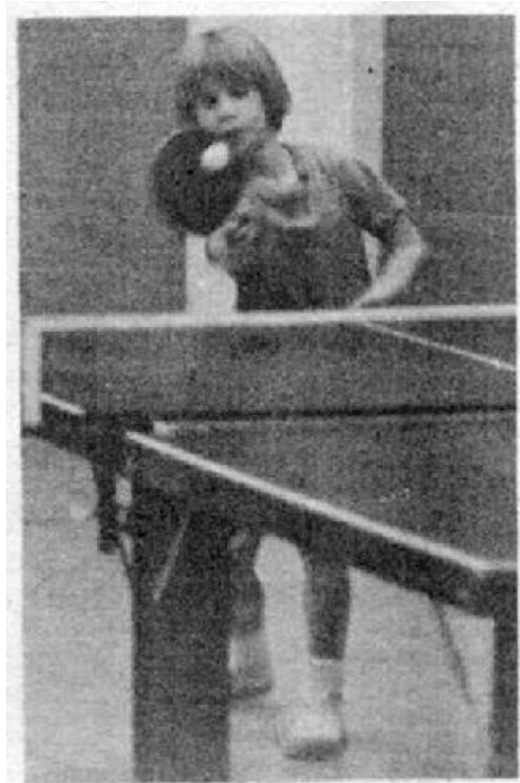


Photo by Mal Anderson

ERIC BOGGAN

Eric Boggan
Topics, May/June 1971

Chapter 6 - House Guest

We as a family were fortunate to participate in the Long Island Table Tennis Association's hospitality program, in which out-of-town players would be hosted at the homes of local players during tournament weekends. Everyone benefited from this effort. The LITTA, which had no real budget, could attract top-ranking players without having to pay their hotel expenses; the stars themselves, who therefore paid only their plane fare and were treated to family-style hospitality in a warm private home; and of course, the hosts, who could undoubtedly expect their guest to provide them with a private lesson or two.

Two of our guests quickly come to mind: Jaroslav "Yardo" Stanek, the Czech champion and quarter-finalist in the previously held World Championships, who stayed with us during the 1969 Eastern Open, and Dell Sweeris, the U.S.'s #2 ranking player, our guest for the 1970 Northeastern Open.

Yardo, a sweet-mannered gentleman, accompanied us to our table in the basement, and treated each of us to a 15-minute lesson. Evelyn, in particular, benefited from his expertise, picking up a surprisingly quick backhand drive that served as a major weapon for years to come.

Sweeris, America's best home-grown talent, and ranked number two behind the perennial U.S. Champion, Korean-born Dal-Joon Lee, provided our impressionable family with some surprising insights. Following the obligatory coaching session, Dell joined us for supper, and later over coffee, with Chuck and I tucked away, shared an intimate conversation with Mort and Evelyn on Table Tennis in general, and on Dell's career in particular. We, of course, were quite impressed with Dell and his outstanding record, and it was suggested that Dell, with his number-two ranking, must be quite pleased with himself. At that moment, Dell's demeanor changed, taking on a look of despair. Slowly, he shook his head, and said to his coffee, "But I could never be number one..."

My parents sat stunned. Dell was a fine player and sportsman who had every reason to be proud of his accomplishments, and yet, here he was, feeling sorry for himself. They told me about the incident the following day, and I, too, was shocked. But it was an important lesson to learn so early in our playing careers – that no matter how successful we might become, it would never be enough.

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Jeff and Dell Sweeris at the 1970 Northeastern Open.
The LITTA began a trend of allowing the stars to enter the Men's Class "A" Doubles event with juniors.



Drawing by EVELYN ZAKARIN

**In 1970, Tim Boggan took over as editor of Table Tennis Topics.
Evelyn helped out with some art work.
Hubba! Hubba!
Topics, September/October 1970**

Chapter 7 - Errol and Jairie

Errol and Jairie Resek came into our lives in the year 1970. Errol, a native of the Dominican Republic, and a nationally-recognized star, was successfully coaching a number of youngsters on Long Island. My parents contacted him to inquire regarding his willingness to work with Chuck and myself. He agreed, and shortly thereafter, he and his wife Jairie (pronounced “Jerry”), arrived at our home for our first lesson.

The Reseks proved to be a wonderfully engaging couple. Errol was a modest man with a beautiful smile and a soft, Spanish-accented voice, while Jairie, perhaps ten years his senior, was an absolutely effervescent woman with a gift for gossip, which was always in good taste, and never mean-spirited.

Mort: *We had invited Errol and Jairie to our house for a coaching session, and then to stay for dinner. When the lessons were finished, we all had dinner together. The chemistry between us was wonderful. It turns out that the Reseks were very fond of bridge, so when Chuck and Jeff went off to bed, we sat and played bridge for a while. As the Reseks started to leave, I asked Errol how much I owed him. Jairie said that they didn't want any money. Instead, they wanted to be our friends, and to get together again.*

We quickly became the best of friends. Errol and Jairie even filled the role of surrogate parents, looking after us when Evelyn and Mort were away, bringing in pornographic films to show me and my 9-year-old brother.

Errol was selected for the U.S. team to the 1971 World Championships in Nagoya, Japan, and then made history when he and Jairie joined the entourage of American players who were invited to the People's Republic of China as goodwill ambassadors in the phenomenon which came to be known as “Ping-Pong Diplomacy”.

Jairie herself became a well-known figure in table tennis circles, writing a gossip column which would appear regularly in *Table Tennis Topics*.

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Left: Errol Resek. Topics, November/December 1971.
Right: Jairie Resek. Topics, May/June 1977.



Errol & Jairie during historic trip to China.
Topics, May/June 1971

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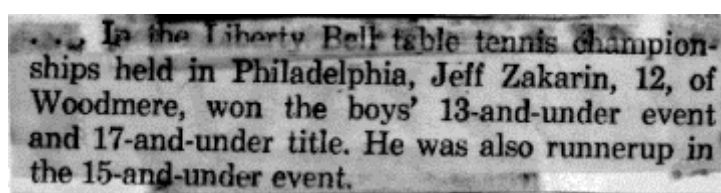
U.S. and Chinese Teams in Peking in 1971.
Topics, May/June 1971

Chapter 8 - Philadelphia Story

Mort: *In the fall of 1970, we were planning to take a trip to Allentown, Pennsylvania, for a family reunion. Allentown is where Ev was born. There was going to be a party at her Uncle Jerry's farm. Aunts, uncles and cousins were coming from all over the east coast. Well, it turned out that there was also going to be a table tennis tourney in Philadelphia that same weekend, the Liberty Bell Open. The junior matches were to be played on Saturday morning and Jeff wanted to enter.*

"Why not," I said, "It's not far from Allentown, let's do it." And we entered Jeff and Chuck in the tournament - Jeff was entered in the Boys Under 13, 15, and 17 Singles, though he was only twelve at the time.

Jeff played beautifully. He won the Under 13, but lost in two straight games in the finals of the Under 15. Then, believe it or not, he got to the finals of the Under 17, where he had to play the same kid he had lost to in the Under 15. Like all the matches, it was the best two out of three games. Jeff started off strong and won the first game. His opponent won the next game easily. It was down to the final game. Thinking back, I was more nervous than anyone. It was always hard to tell if Jeff was nervous. He kept his emotions in check when he played. The final game went back and forth until it was fifteen-all. At that point, I clearly remember, Jeff stopped, turned away from the table, closed his eyes, clenched his fists, then turned to play. The rallies were long and exhausting, but Jeff never lost another point. He won that final game 21-15.



Newsday, 14 October 1970

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The other exciting matches were in the Juniors, where Blowstein beat Scheno 19 in the third, Robbins beat Milgram deuce in the third, Zakarin beat Alley 19 the third, and Boys Under 13 winner, Jeff Zakarin, who's fast becoming a contender for the national title, after losing to Scott Cooper in the 15's, beat him deuce in the third to win the 17's.

With matches like these in the A's and Junior's, I suppose any number of people don't see the point of carrying their long day's journey into the night to catch, say, even the quarter's of the Men's. No, they've had enough table tennis for one day, thank you. And who can blame them?

And who can blame the better players for not knowing even at the last minute how to solve the dilemma they're faced with?

It's not only Rory who needs to hear from the High Lama.

SS FINALS: Lieberman d. Verta 24, 18, 1/2; Shaffer 14, 15. Lieberman d. Rocker 9, 17.

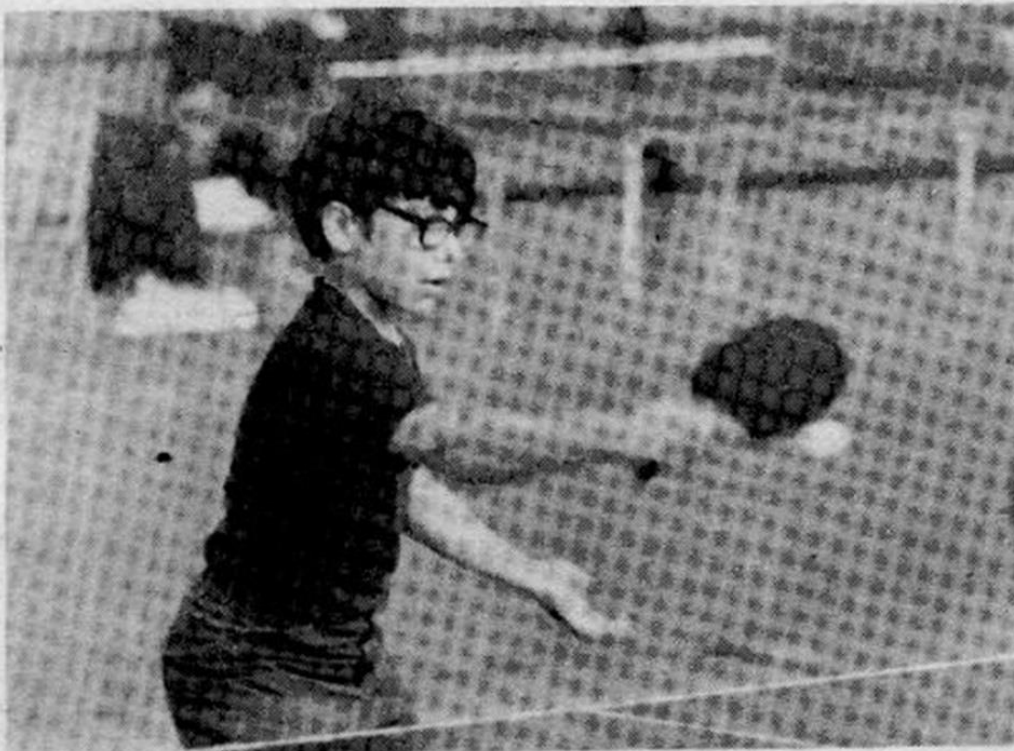
B17 FINAL: J. Zakarin d. Cooper 20, -15, 21, 1/2; J. Zakarin d. Robbins 13, -15, 12. Cooper d. Stakes default.

B15 FINAL: Cooper d. J. Zakarin 9, 20, 1/2; Cooper d. Stern 12, 18. J. Zakarin d. Van Zandt 8, 7.

B13 RR: J. Zakarin d. Plotnick, Van Zandt, C. Zakarin, M. Stern. M. Stern d. Van Zandt, Plotnick, C. Zakarin.

JR.D RR: Alley-Scheno d. McDowell-Stern, Cooper-Blowstein, Wilson-Palmer. McDowell-Stern d. Cooper-Blowstein, Wilson-Palmer.

CLASS A FINALS: P. Cohen d. Vichnin 19, 16, 1/2; P. Cohen d. Kaminsky 14, 17. Vichnin d. Holz 12, -19, 21.



JEFF ZAKARIN

photo by Mal Anderson

TABLE TENNIS TOPICS

Jeff in 1970. Are you intimidated yet?
Article by Tim Boggan, Topics, November/December 1970

Chapter 9 - Atlanta

**41 st ANNUAL
UNITED STATES OPEN
TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS**



**WELCOME TO
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM - MARCH 19, 20 & 21, 1971**

What an exciting feeling it was for all of us to be traveling to Atlanta for the 1971 U.S. Open, our first time at the national championships! And for the first time, with something big at stake. With my high seeding, I was a candidate to win the Boys Under 13 Singles, and the favorite to win the Boys Under 13 Doubles with my partner, Tim House.

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Actually, much of the drama regarding the doubles event took place long before the championships began. Tim and I had agreed to play together some months before. “Timmy,” as he was known, was a precocious boy from New York City who played without parental guidance, and was “looked after” by the regulars at the 73rd Street Club. Not surprisingly then, in addition to his playing skills, Timmy had become an adept poker player as well.

Timmy was also good at breaking promises. We had planned to play together at a number of earlier events, but on occasion, he would inform me at the last minute that he had found another partner. I would usually take it in stride. These things weren’t worth getting upset about.

A few weeks before the Open, I received a phone call from Timmy. “I’m sorry,” he informed me, “but I’ve decided to play doubles at the National’s with Jeff Jarvela from Michigan.” Well, this time I *was* getting upset, and Mort, who was sitting nearby at that moment, picked up the phone and started to threaten Timmy. “I assure you that you and Jeff [Zakarin] will never play doubles together again,” he asserted, and hung up. Timmy himself must have become upset, as a few minutes later, a telephone call arrived from Timmy’s previously unheard of father, who was also apparently upset, and wanted to know what was going on.

After Mort finished explaining the situation, Mr. House agreed that Timmy had acted unfairly, and suggested that *I* should enter the doubles with Jeff Jarvela. Now, I had met Jeff previously, and to be honest, I didn’t like him. No, I insisted, Timmy and I should play as agreed, and in the end, all parties came to the same conclusion.

Where was I? Oh, yes, Atlanta. In the Boys Under 13 Singles, I progressed easily through the early rounds, making it to the semi-final, where I was to play against... Jeff Jarvela. Jeff was much bigger and stronger than I, and had already developed a good forehand topspin. (For years after, the rumor persisted that Jeff was already 13 years old on the previous July 1, making him ineligible to play in this event). Our match started evenly, with Jarvela taking a slight lead, and my forehand smash repeatedly hitting the top of the net and popping off the side of the table. He won the first game in our best-of-5 series, 21-14, and the second in deuce, 24-22.

Game 3 was even from the beginning to the end, and also went into deuce. At 21-21, I wound up, and this time my forehand smash went in. “That’s it!” I cried, thinking that I had already won the game, and moved to the opposing side of the table to start game 4, where my opponent stood open-mouthed. I looked at the umpire, whose mouth was also open. The 15-or-so spectators seemed to be in shock. “23-21, right?” I asked. The umpire shook his head no. “22-21.” I retreated to my side of the table and resumed play. Jarvela took the next 3 points,

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let out a yell, and was congratulated at the edge of the court by his friends from Michigan. I slowly put on my sweater and walked off the court, disappointed. Never mind. Jeff Jarvela would go on to win the final round in an exciting 5-game match that would be the talk of the tournament.

Anyway, we still had the doubles...

BOYS 13. Final: J. Jarvela d. S. Hammond, -8, 16, 14, -10, 22. Semi's: Jarvela d. J. Zakarin, 14, 22, 23; Hammond d. M. Stern, -17, 8, 16, 16. Quarter's: Jarvela d. F. Burks; Zakarin d. H. Korman; Hammond d. T. House, 20, 8, 20; Stern d. R. Seemiller, 22, 15, 11.

Topics, May/June 1971

BOYS UNDER 13
1. Jeff Jarvela (Mich)
2. Steve Hammond (Okla)
3. Jeff Zakarin (N.Y.)
4. Mike Stern (N.J.)
5. Timmy House (N.Y.)
6. Mike Dempsey (Ohio)
7. Murray Kutler (Neb)
7. Rick Seemiller (Penna)
9. Robert Noehenson (N.J.)
10. Freddy Burks (Ill.)

**1971: Jeff is #3 in the U.S. Boys Under 13 Ranking List.
Topics, January/February 1973**

Chapter 10 - Doubles

Both Tim House and I, now out of the singles, were hungry for a win in the Boys Under 13 Doubles competition. We had several advantages as a doubles team. For one, Timmy was a lefty while I was a right-hander, which allowed both of us to use our forehands as much as possible. We had complimentary skills as well – Timmy had a good topspin, which could produce a weak return. I could then put the ball away with my forehand smash.

Also playing in the doubles were Chuck, aged 8, and his partner, Eric Boggan, aged 7. They were now earning a reputation on a national level, as reported in *Table Tennis Topics*:

A black and white photograph of a newspaper clipping. The text reads: "early titles: Then there was Eric Boggan playing doubles with Chuck Zakarin. Both eight years old, two feet high, and academy award nominees...my stomach still hurts from laughing!..."

Steve Isaacson, *Topics*, May/June 1971

Timmy and I eventually reached the finals, where we ran into stiff competition from New Jersey's Mike Stern and Robert Nochenson. We lost the first game 21-19, but ran away with the second. In the deciding 3rd, our opponents started pulling away, as panic briefly set in on our side. Trailing 15-10, we took a moment to compose ourselves, and started concentrating. We managed to close to 19-16, with Timmy serving. Magically, we won point after point, as panic now set in on the opposing side of the table. As we took the lead, 20-19, Robert started audibly weeping. The next and final point was ours and we had each won our first National Championship! It was a heady feeling to know that, at least for a moment, we were the *best*. For most of us, it's a moment that we never relive.

A black and white photograph of a newspaper clipping. The text reads: "BOYS 13 DOUBLES. Final: House-Zakarin d. Nochenson-Stern, -19, 4, 19. Semi's: House-Zakarin d. Hammond-Kutler, 17-11, 17; Nochenson-Stern d. Jarvela-Wilson, 16, -24, 16."

Topics, May/June 1971

FAMILY PONG



Timmy House.
Topics, December 1970