

Newsletter December 2006

Table tennis players, andro customers, fans of the fastest sports on earth!

In the course of the new season, all andro players have yet good results. The successful start of this year's Pro Tour events in Europe contended another two medals.

This newsletter gives you a review of these successes, of opening ceremony of the German Table Tennis Centre in Düsseldorf and also the strong performance of double Vice-World Champion Christian Süß in the first half of the current season in the German Bundesliga. In a detailed interview, upcoming star Christian Süß speaks about his pretty good results for his club, but also about his problems at international tournaments.

In his well-known straight-lined way, Süß criticise the planned "Peking -System" for the Olympic Games 2008. andro explains this unknown system in detail and sums up its weak points. Furthermore, andro reports about the decision of the Japanese Association to establish the gluing ban for their trainees already in spring 2007.

In addition to that, andro presents an exclusive interview with contract-player Karen Opdecamp. The Belgian Champion speaks about her career and about her new full-time job at the National Association for handicapped people.

We hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and wish you a lot of fun!

Your andro Team

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Pro Tour Polish + German Open – review and results

„Golden Autumn“ for andro partners: Titles and two medals

Just in front of the Grand Finals at Hongkong in December, a really „golden autumn“ became the crowning glory for andro partners during the last two Pro Tour tournaments in 2006. Two medals in the double event for andro Pro Team players at the German Open, Bayreuth, are followed by women single

competition win at the Polish Open, Warsaw, realised by a member of the Polish team and therefore an extraordinary good outcome in regard to the yet young relation with the Polish Federation.

Li Qian, the new Polish women star, was responsible for the most successful weekend for Poland at an international tournament since the era of the legendary idol Andrzej Grubba. Twenty year old defensive strategist Li celebrated her final win against none lesser than European champion Liu Jia - by the way, at an andro table. Her first triumph came at only her second participation in a Pro Tour event. Playing since two years in Poland, the Chinese young woman made just one week before a remarkable debut in the U21 ITTF tournament series at Bayreuth. The totally enthusiastic Polish spectators have already been in high spirits before her final match, because the Polish duo won the men double event just before.

The winning ceremonies at Bayreuth found also andro players on the podium. Reaching the semi-final, Christian SÜB qualified himself for the Grand Finals 2006. Borussia Düsseldorf's top player will try to defend the men double title (achieved 2005 together with Timo Boll). SÜB will be the only representative of the andro Pro Team at the Grand Finals. andro players Elke Wosik/Wu Jiaduo gained Bronze medals in the women double competition, too. Regarding the single events, light and clouds alternated for andro players. The most consistent performance was done by Elke Wosik when reaching the last sixteen at Bayreuth and the quarter final at the Polish Open. Former four times European Champion, Elke confirmed her upswing and lost her „home match“ at Bayreuth against „TOP 15“ world-ranked US Chinese player Gao Jun and in Warsaw, after a success against strong Spanish player Shen Yanfei, only new champion Li Qian could stop her.



Meanwhile, Wu used the participation at Warsaw to make amends for her first round defeat during the German Open: The number two ranked FSV Kroppach player redeemed herself by qualifying for the last sixteen. Also, Nadine Bollmeier achieved completely different results: The German born Netherlands legionnaire, playing for TTV Heerlen in the Champions League, did not overcome the Qualification at Bayreuth. In the first round at Warsaw, she eliminated former Italian Europe team champion Wenling Tan-Monfardini, showing, as done before in the Champions League, her international competitiveness. At both events, the hopes of Christian SÜB and Xu Jie remained nearly unfulfilled. The Vice World Champion men doubles couldn't tie up to his strong Bundesliga performance neither at Bayreuth nor at the Polish Open.

Also, Xu Jie didn't succeed in overcoming the second round neither at Bayreuth nor in their adopted country (Poland). Belgian andro-idol Jean-Michel Saive was faced with a short term participation for the World Cup end of October; due to this fact and his upcoming tasks for his Champions League Club Royal Vilette Charleroi, he left Bayreuth and Warsaw aside. At the same time, he wasted the chance of qualifying for the Grand Finals. In 2005, the former ranked No. 1 player, finished there as finalist.

Interview Christian Süss: Bundesliga and Olympia

Christian Süss:
Pro Tour breakthrough will come

Christian, it is the first season for you at the first table in the German Bundesliga. Besides good results, you wanted to assume more responsibility in your team. Have you already realised your plans after the first half of the current season?

I think, that I have more responsibilities than before. I have already stepped into the breach for my team, when our top player didn't win the expected point. All in all I have to say that the current situation comes up to the expectations I had before this season.



How is it possible for a top-player to assume responsibility for a team outside of the court?

It's hard to say. When we are in the cubicle, I try to motivate the others. But one also has to take over leadership in other matters. One should take younger and not so experienced players by their hands, try to be a good listener and one should have a feeling for the atmosphere in the team. I think that I have already assumed that role.

After the first half of this season you have reached a clear positive record. Before your first match you have spoken about more decent goals. What are the reasons for your positive results?

I am always very good prepared for each match and I had a pretty good pre-season during the summer. Besides that, I had a perfect start into the season and because of that my self-confidence is very strong. All these facts helped me to play so great. Before this season, I have never expected to play such a positive first half.

Already now you are in the top-50 of the world ranking. During the last Pro Tour Tournaments it was not possible for you to release your full potential. How do you explain your different national and international results?

I am also brooding about my results. Maybe it is a little bit easier for me to play in the Bundesliga because you already know weeks before, who will be your next opponent. During a Pro Tour tournament things are hectic: normally one does not know the competition hall and one has to look from match to match. Very often, one has to switch from single to double only in a short period of time, that's not easy.

How do you handle the complications?

I am sure that I am still in a process of learning. Because of that, I am not really worried, I just try to be patient. My Pro Tour breakthrough will come.

One of your aims is to belong to the top 30 of the world in 2008. Do you still think that you can achieve that goal?

Yes, that's still in my mind and I think I will reach that goal.

Because of the Olympic Games in 2008, the World Ranking is very important at the beginning of that year. In addition to the single competition, there will be for the first time also a team competition instead of a double. The modus of this team competition is known as very complicated and at the beginning it is very difficult to understand. What do you think about the "Peking-System"?

I can really understand the scepticism and the reservation against this system. It's sort of weird, when you have a team competition at the Olympic Games and during five matches it is not automatically guaranteed that the top players of a nation will play against each other.

The double plays a very important role in this system. Especially China will have a big advantage against all other nations because they are in a position to use many different possible combinations. In contrast to China, a lot of nations only have one top-player. Requirements towards ITTF and its president Adam Sharara to revise the "Peking-System" are surely not unwarranted.

If the ITTF should effectively improve the system, would the modifications come to late for the players?

No, I don't think so. Until yet, the "Peking-System" is only used in China's Super League and at the "China versus the world"-event. This means that only the Chinese players and a few European players, who are playing in China's Super League, know this system. In case of a modification, most of the players don't have to rethink.

During the next Olympic Games, the team competition is taking place for the double competition. This is very unlucky for you because you are Vice-World Champion in doubles and you would always have good chances to win a medal at a big event.

Do you regret that you are possibly born too late?

Yes, I think that's true. It's very annoying for me, because my partner Timo Boll and me will always have the opportunity to reach a medal. Furthermore, it's a pity because everybody would like to win at the Olympic Games because they are only held every four years. But it makes no sense to be disappointed about this decision. One just has to accept it.

I think that we will also take the chance to win a medal as a team.

Christian, thank you very much for the interview.

Olympic premiere for team event

The „Peking system“: Unknown vehicle with lack of strength

The premiere of team event competition at the Olympic Games in Beijing is yet responsible for hot tempered discussions in the international table tennis scene. Many players and trainers see the problem not only with the missing experience in handling the mode, hitherto only practised in China's Super League, but also the danger of losing the best games between the top players of the adverse teams consisting of each 3 players.

Up to now, the conventional systems at major championships and other important team events, besides the possibility of a clear team win without one game win for the opponent team, always rule a duel of

both top players from both teams. The Peking system utterly enables to avoid the match of the top players by tactical thought. Not a few and also andro top player and Vice World Champion in men doubles Christian SÜB (see also the interview with Christian SÜB at another part of this newsletter) apply from ITTF belated corrections regarding the Olympic System.

There are mainly two reasons for the dilemma of the mode: On one hand the efforts to develop a playing system for Olympic Games in order to have a balance for the cancellation of the doubles matches from the summer games, on the other hand it was a target that an outstanding player would not be in a position to achieve all necessary three winning points quasi single-handedly; therefore, he can only play in two single matches and not in the double or solely in each one single and in the double match. On this premises and the assumption of one team can choose its formation totally free, the ITTF decided to have for Peking 2008 the following rules:

The maximum five games of one team event are held in the order of two single matches, one double match and once more two single matches.

Number 1 and number 2 of both teams meet each other during the first two single matches either respectively in a direct duel or in a crossover comparison.

Player no. 1 or no. 2 of both teams play the double match together with player no. 3 of their team.

In case the result after the double match did not come up to 3 : 0 (and therefore the win for one team), those players who did not participate in the double match and player no. 3 have to play the two final single matches.

Under these circumstances, at first, the team A player who have not participated in the double match, faces player no. 3 from team B. If eventually a fifth match is necessary, player no. 3 of team A faces the player of team B, who has not participated in the double match.

Therefore, a team event at the Olympic Games, as things are now, is tabulated as following:

A 1 or A 2	-	B 1 or B 2
A 2 or A 1	-	B 2 or B 1
A 3 and A 1 / 2	-	B 3 and B 1 / 2
A 1 or A 2	-	B 3
A 3	-	B 1 or B 2

Besides the two main possible conflicts, one can find further deficits: Assuming with high presumption that usually none of the two best players firstly appears primary in the double match, the deciding meetings will probably be happen in the beginning and spectator's attention - just at Olympia - will remarkably decrease. It seems that the dramaturgy after the double match will almost solely depending on surprises by each no. 3 player of every team against the mostly more strong no. 1 oder no. 2 of each other team.

Moreover, those team who has been drawn by lot as team A, has two obvious advantages in case the meeting of the teams has to be continued after the double match (at 2 : 1 or 1 : 2): Because one of its two stronger players firstly faces the mostly weakest player of team B; assuming a possible break , because he does not participate in the double match, he will be „fresh“ for the first then upcoming single match that could possibly lead into a final result. Against that, player no. 3 of team B definitely has to play two matches (at first one double match and then one single match) in a row.

ITTF does not accept proposals for improvement, arguing that the double match has to be integrated into the system; also ITTF is not willing to reduce the significance of the top players (which is also criticised by some insiders). In fact, ITTF always argues that the mode enables enough possibilities for tactical variations.

ITTF only accepted the critics regarding the lack of experience when using the Peking-System at the Olympic Games: In 2007, players, coaches and teams shall test the mode during the spectacular „China versus the world“ match as well as during re-initiated World Team Cup (last event has been performed in 1995). However, it seems that not all members of ITTF are convinced of the new mode : At the World Team Championships 2008 in Guangzhou/China, the winning team will be honoured after having played the matches due to the current mode. Only after Beijing, ITTF will decide which one of the both competing modes will bring out the best as team mode for its major tournaments.

Speed gluing series, part 6: Japan again in cutting-edge role

Speed glue ban for children in Japan from spring 2007 on

Furthermore Japan is still actively going on in their leading role against the so-called “speed glue ban”. Up from April 2007, Children under the age of 12 years are not allowed to use glues with organic solvents anymore.

The resolution of the Asians can be interpreted as a hidden protest against the u-turn of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) regarding the high-sensible question of the gluing ban. During their congress at the World Championships in Bremen, the ITTF followed the pressure of a few top players and decided to reschedule the date for the ban of using organic solvents for the time after the Olympic Games 2008. In contrast to the decision of the ITTF, Japan shows determination in its fight for a “clean” table tennis sport.

Because of the high health risk by gluing rubbers, this process is currently a violation of the Olympic charter and jeopardise the affiliation of table tennis to the Olympic Summer Games. This fact is the reason, why the Japanese Association JTTA have been pushed by their National Olympic Association to initiate counter activities.

JTTA Secretary General Koji Kimura, who has always expressed his denial against speed gluing and who, being ITTF vice-president, brought always some force into the efforts to cancel speed-gluing; he apparently strives for the goal to cancel the “double decision”, made during the meeting at Bremen that the speed gluing ban will come, but only 2008. Adam Sharara didn't want to rule out such a proceeding, even after Bremen and subject to the approval of all manufacturers.

Kimuras goal is to realise the Olympic Games at Beijing without “racket tuning” by making use of the disputed solvents. In this case, the protection for the teens and the youngest players seems to be consequential and as well a question of authenticity. On the other hand, it is also allowed to see the JTTA-decision as a pilot scheme or as a producibility study. It's clear that the improvement of the healthy general regulations for Japans newcomer is not only a success of activity . Because of the already approved control equipment, it is quite easy for the JTTA within their structures to control the realisation of the gluing ban.

Japans and Kimuras message to the ITTF at the next Individual World Championships in Zagreb 2007 will be well-defined: Have a look, it's already working out very well!

The Japanese approach, to be seen not only as a strategy, put also other nations on the spot. The fact that something is already working in the country of the rising sun, should be also possible in other European countries. A ban of the risky substances will not only protect the cadet girls and boys, it will also provide all actives as coaches, referees and functionaries with valuable experiences of the new guidelines for “the day X”.

Sportsmanlike seen, an early direction would additionally give the next after tomorrow generation one year winning margin for the change to future circumstances

- particularly one has to consider that an end of the technical development is not to prescind. Not long ago, glue, comfortable to use without any solvents, have been introduced into the Japanese market. Within a short time, these will also be available in Germany. Especially such development disprove those who have been sceptic during the last years. Meanwhile, the manufacturers are in a position to offer to their top sport partners as well as to the basis appropriate products without any risk for the health, in order to find a new position within the changing market. Looking back, it seems that the necessary pressure that should have been built up before by ITTF, was done too late.

Performance and care instructions for TENSOR rubbers

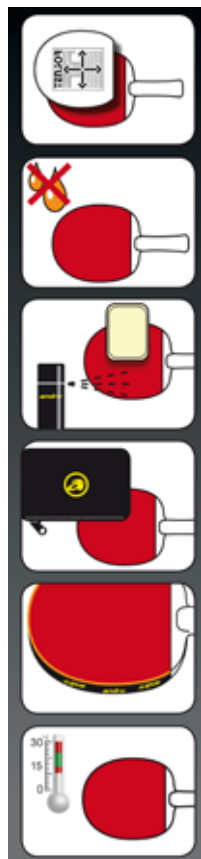
More performance via built-in speed-gluing effect

The speed-glue effect of andro TENSOR rubbers is already built-in by a special manufacturing process. This means more speed, spin and sound than when using conventional rubbers.

TENSOR rubbers immediately evolve their full power, the discomfort of gluing can completely be avoided (PLASMA) or significantly reduced (QUAD).

Performance and rubber lifetime

Classic rubber can be played approximately 60 practice units without fresh gluing. If speed-glued intensively, the lifetime of these rubbers will reduce to ca. 20 practice units. TENSOR and TENSOR BIOS rubbers with their integrated speed-glue power have a lifetime of 30-40 practice units if the care instructions are considered.



Use the TENSOR rubber protection foil: It protects the rubber 100% against humidity, air and warmth. The continuous use of the foil is the most important protection for the rubber.

Leave the rubber on the racket: TENSOR rubbers do not require additional speed gluing. It is best to permanently leave the rubber on the racket.

Regular cleaning: After practice or matches always clean the rubber with water or special andro rubber cleaners.

Always use the protection wallet: andro bat cases protect effectively against harmful light/ sun rays and mechanic destruction.

Edge tape prevents from crumbling away: The built-in speed-gluing effect makes the rubber more brittle than conventional rubbers. andro special edge tapes with over-width help to prevent it.

Avoid cold and heat: Please avoid that the racket is exposed to high or very low temperatures, thus for example never leave the racket in the car for a longer time.

Material intro : andro KRYPTO: TENSOR now available in tricky pimples.



How to ask your opponent riddles...

Performance increase due to TENSOR is a well-known phenomenon for pimple inside rubbers. andro has produced tricky pips rubbers with the TENSOR effect and gained amazing results: the unpredictability of the tricky pimple effect is significantly enforced by the TENSOR technology. Slice or non-slice, block or stop-block – with the KRYPTO the difference is even more striking. The smooth pimple surface will get every ball to flutter and destroys the opponent's playing strategy. No matter if blocking at the table or playing long defensive strokes - TENSOR-pimple-technology stands for a high dimension of spin reversal. One can only encourage the opponent: not all players are armed with the KRYPTO.

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Karen Opdencamp Interview

Karen Opdencamp: Structures are missing in Belgian

Karen, belatedly congratulations from the whole andro team for your successful defence of the Belgian Championship title. In spite of your success, everything was a little bit quieter around you than a few weeks before. What are the reasons for that?

I have taken up a job for the Belgian Handicapped Association. I think that's the reason.

Why did you come to that principle decision?

It was a very good opportunity for me. Actually it is not very easy for a female player to earn a crust solely by playing table tennis. In addition to that, it seems to me the better way for the future.

But you still have ambitions in table tennis?

Certainly! At the moment I am around number 260 in the current world ranking, but I would like to achieve a position around number 150 in the world.

How is it possible to reach that goal under the pressure of your new job?

Of course, that's not easy because I have signed a contract with the Association for a 38-hour-week. But also in future, I will try to practise as much as possible. In the past, table tennis training was very important for me, but today the situation has changed. Because of my comparatively low training possibilities, I have to do more fitness training to balancing the shortfalls. I know that I have the potential, this is also to be seen with my permanent good results. At last in the European Championship Qualification I won against Petra Lovas from Hungary.

How much does your job reduce your participation at Pro Tour Tournaments?

That is one of the main problems, because you can only get the necessary experiences at big and important tournaments. Furthermore, you can earn most of the points for the world ranking at those events. I am getting a lot of support from the association I am working for, but I cannot miss so much time in the office. I also only have 20 holidays per year. Recently I played at the Serbian Open, but I have already lost in



the qualification. Of course, I intended to play at the German Open, unfortunately I didn't have the time. The next Pro Tour Tournament I have planned to play are the Slovenia Open in January 2007.

You say you are short of time. In spite of that you changed your club before the current season. You left your Belgian club Auderghem and went to Beauchamp, a club in the first French league. How do you organise that?

Our matches in France are normally every two weeks on a Tuesday. So, on a Monday morning, I usually travel by train to Paris and I come back to Belgium Wednesday about noon. Of course, I have to make up my work. That means that I have to work very often also at the weekends.

Why did you take this additional burden?

Maybe it sounds a little bit strange, but we don't have so many good female players in Belgium. I am getting more support and aid in France.

Do think that this time and effort will be a benefit for you?

I really hope, that I will become a better player in the future. In Belgium the structures are still missing. The matches are held in very small halls and very often one has to play without a referee. Also the national team has no structures. Usually I never see my team colleagues, we only meet each other for the European Championship qualification. Because of the circumstances and the problems in our country between the Flemings and the Walloons there is no progress to see. That's also a reason, why I am now playing in France.

How is it going in Beauchamp?

Actually its going on very well. Unfortunately, the club and also me did not win very often until yet, but my focus is on the experience, I am having there. I hope that I will learn at Beauchamp because I want to continue to be the best female player in Belgium.

Let us go back to your new job: how did everything begin?

Because of my sport studies, I have already worked together with children and disable people. Therefore, I came in touch with the association, offering me the new job a few weeks later. First it was a part-time job. But after a while, I got a full-time job.

What are your duties and responsibilities?

I am responsible for athletes in more than 20 different sports. I have to organise their whole training-arrangements and competitions. This is a strong task, but on the other hand it is also very interesting.

Karen, we wish you all the best with your new job and also for your further table tennis career. Thank you very much for the interview.

Player Portrait

Name:	Karen Opdecamp
Birthday:	5th of August 1981
Nationality:	Belgian (Flemish speaking)
Height:	169 cm
Weight:	61 kg
Nickname:	Kaalje



Club membership (history):

Belgium, 3 years in Germany (Glane 2nd Bundesliga), 1 year in Brussels, now 1st year in France (Beauchamp Pro A)

Which material are you using (rubbers/blade)?

andro Super Core OFF, andro revolution cor max (both sides)

Success Story:

- 2 times Belgian Champion (2005 and 2006)
- Bulgaria Open 2005: singles 3rd, doubles with Eva Tapai (Serbia) 1st.
- Flanders Open 2003: 4th

Career highlight:

European league matches in 2005-2006: won against Lovas (HUN 103) and Wang Yu (ITA 123)

Life attitude:

Planning is everything. You can do so much more if you try very hard and keep on thinking positive!

Hobbies:

Traveling and visiting other countries (snorkling on a small island...)

sports:

table tennis, fitness, running and racketlon (= combination of 4 sports: tennis, badminton, squash and table tennis), relaxing in a health farm (sauna, swimming, massage...) and surfing on internet!

How did you start to play table tennis?

I did many sports camps as a child: one time I did a table tennis camp and I immediately enjoyed it and had many friends there. When the trainer asked me to join the club, I started at the age of 8.

What is the fascination about table tennis?

It is the most difficult sport with a ball because of all the rotation and many varieties in speed.

What is your tip for successful training?

Concentration and eat enough bananas to keep enough energy!

Slobodan Grujic joins andro

Flash report: Slobodan Grujic joins andro

andro has a new face in his team: the Serbian player Slobodan Grujic decided to join the andro promotion team starting January 1st 2007. andro is looking forward to the co-operation with the friendly guy, well-known as a double specialist, who is famous for his professional and modern table tennis, personifying the andro ProTeam generation. His fans gave him the nickname „Bobo“. Still playing for Gönnern in the Bundesliga, he currently faces the same world ranking position as Christian Süß (no. 47). andro will accompany Slobodan Grujic when he is going to join the European Championships next year in his country (25th March - 1st April in Belgrade) and afterwards the Individual World Championships in the bordering country Croatia (21st - 27th Mai in Zagreb).

You will find a detailed interview and more facts about Bobo Grujic in our next newsletter.

Opening of the DTTZ in Duesseldorf

DTTZ-Opening: Star roles for andro players

During the official opening ceremony of the new table tennis centre in Düsseldorf the two andro players Christian Süß and Katharina Michajlova did a special performance. At first, the 17-year old national player Katharina Michajlova and some other members of the residential table tennis school provided an insight into their daily training. On that occasion, 200 guests from sport, business and politics joined the centrepiece of Germany's new table tennis centre (DTTZ). One of the highlights was the exhibition-match of Vice Double World Champion Christian Süß and his partner Timo Boll. The two pros showed the fascination of their sport in many different facings.



Just in front of the table tennis performance on top level, one was impressed by cordial applause during the ceremonial height: Hans Wilhelm Gäb, honorary president of the German Table Tennis Association and project-initiator received an ultra-large racket, looking like a big key for the DTTZ, from Düsseldorf's Lord Mayor Joachim Erwin. "The new table tennis centre is a centrepiece for the German table tennis as well as for the whole German sport.", Gäb said in his following speech in front of honourable guests like Vice-President Walter Schneeloch and Michael Vesper, General Director of the German Olympic Sport Association (DOSB).

Ministerial director Klaus Pöhle commended in the name of Federal Minister Wolfgang Schäuble the initiative for the latest table tennis centre in Europe: "One has to be brave, to concentrate on the forces. But you can only keep contact to the top of the world, when you take heart to do that." The project costs are 5,8 million Euro and the construction period took only 14 months. The City of Düsseldorf invest half of the cost, the Federal State Nordrhein Westfalen paid 30 percent and a fifth part of the costs were borne by the Federation. "5,8 million Euro is a lot of money, but I think this is a really good investment", explained Erwin: "We are pleased that our city is the German practise basis for one of the big Olympic sports."

The president of the German Table Tennis Association, Thomas Weikert, thanked the City, the Federal State and the Federation and promised: "We will take the unique chance, given by the new table tennis centre here in Düsseldorf."

Among other things, andro is represented with its table tennis school and is also supplier of different items like, for example, tables. The main item of the centre is the residential table tennis school for the upgrowing player generation. Additionally, it is possible to make use of two ultra-modern and, in addition, specially assembled halls in order to host international training camps.

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