

BRIGHT FUTURE: THE TOP JUNIOR GIRLS ARE ALREADY CHALLENGING ELITE PLAYERS IN THE SPORT

At age 12, Ariel Hsing (right) held off an international field to win the Junior Girls' Title at the Pan Am Junior Championships



An Interview with Ariel Hsing

by Ken Trinh

Congratulations on your great performance winning the North America Cadet and Junior Girls at the North American Championships. You just had a good win over Jackie Lee. Was that your best win ever?

Ariel: Not really. I just got lucky and Jackie was not ready.

Ok, so what was your best win?

Ariel: All my wins are good. I have a lot of good losses too. My dad really enjoyed watching me lose to Coach Gao Jun yesterday. But he complained it all happened too fast.

You won't like this question. What was your worst moment in table tennis?

Ariel: Hmm... One time I got hit on the head and had to forfeit the match to go to the emergency room.

What's your proudest moment in table tennis?

Ariel: There are many. The first time I got into the U.S. Cadet Team is definitely one of them. My whole family was especially proud when I was elected third female athlete of the month by USOC.

What's your favorite food?

Ariel: I like all kinds of food. No vegetables, please.

You played with Warren Buffet and Bill Gates. Are they good at table tennis?

Ariel: They are actually surprisingly good.

What do you like to do besides playing table tennis?

Ariel: I like to watch TV and play the clarinet.

Let's get serious. What's your training schedule?

Ariel: I usually play three hours a day, six days a week. It's our family rule that I must have one day off.

What do you do on your day off?

Ariel: I take music lessons.

How you rate yourself among other 12-year-olds around the world?

Ariel: It's hard to say. I usually play girls much older than me at international competitions. But I hope I am one of the tops.

Do you think you are at great disadvantage compared to other Chinese girls?

Ariel: Well, no. they don't get to play with Stefan Feth every week. Who's your coach?

Ariel: Coach Dennis Davis was my coach since I started playing; Coach Stefan is the Elite Junior coach at Palo Alto club and gives me private lessons. I have been playing mostly with Hailong Shen for the past nine months. Of course, there are many great coaches from both China and USA have been helping me.



I heard you wanted to be world champion when you were little. Do you still want to be world champion?

Ariel: I want to be an Olympic champion. Of course, I'll need to make the team first, which is very, very tough.

Some media call you the Sharopova of Table Tennis. Do you know who Sharopova is?

Ariel, I love the story that when Sharopova was four or five, her grandma was crying the night before her dad was going to take her to the U.S. Sharopova was folding her clothing calmly and seemed to know what her destiny is. But comparing me to her is a big stretch.

You wrote "Let go" and "Have fun" on your forearm. What does that mean?

Ariel: You know what "Have fun" means. I read Michelle Kwan's biography that she performed well at the Olympics, but didn't win the gold medal. She asked her coach "Why is this happening?" Her coach replied, "Michelle, you didn't let go." I want to "let go" no matter who I am playing.

Ariel, you are a very smart girl.

Ariel: Thanks. Can you say it again? I want my mom to hear it.

Both your parents are recreational table tennis players. Who's better?

Ariel: My mom.

Last question, how did you become so good – besides the great coaches you have?

Ariel: There are many people helping me. Uncle Bruce and Uncle James give me all kinds of playing opportunities. Uncle Andy would lose to me before big tournaments to give me more confidence. Truong plays with me, Misha taught me all his tricky serves, there are just so many. Oh, and coach Rajul would play with me every Wednesday even though he has a big club to run. I am sure Coach Carl spends a lot of time thinking about my game, because every time he sees me he gives me great advices. Coach Bill Lui used to coach the concord girls against me, but he always gave me advices when the match was over. Oh, and there is Coach Doru, Coach Emilia, and Coach Lily. I am very lucky to have so many people helping me. Sorry if I am boring you

Did you forget someone?

Ariel: Yes, Uncle Ken helped me get the prestigious Butterfly sponsorship, and always cheered for me loudly for every match.

I mean your parents.

Ariel: Oops. Without my parents I won't even be here.

Good luck with the Pan America Junior Championship that's coming up next.

Ariel: Thanks! I'll do my best to represent my country well.

Recent Titles Won:

2008 USA Cadet Girl National Team,
2008 Junior Girl National Team.
2008 Pan American Junior Girls
2008 North America Championship Cadet Girls singles
2008 North America Championship Junior Girls singles
2007 USA Cadet Girls National Team
2007 U.S. National Championship Junior Girls Singles
2007 U.S. National Championship Cadet Girls Singles
2007 U.S. National Championship Girls 13 Singles
2007 U.S. Open Championship Girls 13 Singles
2007 North America Championship Cadet Girls singles
2007 North America Championship Cadet Girls Team
2006 USA Cadet Girls National Team
2006 U.S. National Championship Cadet Girls Singles
2006 U.S. National Championship Girls 13 Singles
2006 U.S. Open Championship Girls 15 Singles
2006 U.S. Open Championship Girls 13 Singles
2006 U.S. Open Championship Girls 11 Singles
2005 U.S. National Championship Girl 10 Singles
2005 Junior National under 10 Girl: Gold
2005 Junior National under 12 Girl: Gold
2005 Junior National under 14 Girl: Gold
2005 Junior Olympic under 10 Girl: Gold
2005 Junior Olympic under 12 Girl doubles: Gold
2005 Junior Olympic team under 16 girls: Gold
2004 U.S. National Championship Girl 10 Singles
2003 U.S. National Championship Girl 10 Singles