

# USATT Board Presentation

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## MAGAZINE

- **Vision:** A large circulation, sold on regular and online newsstands nationwide, with ad sales and subscription fees enough to allow magazine to show a substantial profit, while keeping up the high standards of a professional magazine.
- **Goal:** Ad revenue to break \$15,000/issue within one year, \$20,000/issue within three years, and to be on regular newsstands within three years.
- **The Plan:** Continue to solicit advertising while maintaining the high editorial standards. More advertising allows more color pages on good spots in the magazine, which can be sold. Since we are a national magazine with a small circulation, it is extremely difficult to get non-table tennis advertising. So emphasis has to be put on saturating the table tennis advertising market. To do this, we have to continue to produce what advertisers want – a high-quality magazine that members will read, and will thereby see the ads. When membership goes up dramatically from other programs, non-table tennis advertising will follow, and ad rates will go up, increasing revenue.
- **Status**
  - Ad revenue – way up. Two consecutive record-breaking issues. Now averaging over \$13,000/issue, nearly double when I was hired. Budgeted at \$10,000/issue, the May/June issue had \$13,566 in advertising, the most non-election advertising ever.
  - Content – sticking with top-secret formula: Interesting stuff!
  - Timeliness – on time except when asked to delay by USATT for various reasons.
  - Newsstand – on sale at Amazon.com, although somewhat overpriced
- **Recommendations**

No major changes needed in the foreseeable future. Will work on getting it on more regular and online newsstands later on. When USATT membership goes up dramatically, the vision above will be fulfilled – so emphasis needs to be on the programs that increase USATT membership. Meanwhile, I will continue to maximize advertising, in particular from the table tennis community.

## WEB PAGE

- **Vision:** The main table tennis web page in the U.S., with large profits to USATT.
- **Goal:** 10,000 hits/day within one year, 100,000 hits/day within three years, leading to higher online banners sales.
- **The Plan:** Most of increase will inevitably come from the upcoming USATT League.
- **Status**
  - Web page hits – holding steady at about 4000/day after major increases last year. Was about 1650/day when I became a Webmaster in 1999.
  - I've taken over all of Margaret's web duties, and continue to be the one who responds to membership questions (who click on "webmaster" on the home page).
- **Recommendations**
  - Redo home page – we can no longer wait for Americas Teams.
  - Committee home pages
  - College page
  - Make League Page a priority, since it's likely to soon be getting more hits than the rest of USATT web combined.
  - Eventually a full-time Webmaster should be hired to fulfill the vision above – but only after USATT membership has increased dramatically – so emphasis needs to be on the programs that increase USATT membership.

## USATT LEAGUE

- **Vision:** A nationwide network made up of huge numbers of USATT League members, and the transformation of USATT from its historic 8000 or so regular members to a membership of hundreds of thousands of league members.
- **Goal:** A minimum of 10,000 USATT league members within two years, 100,000 members within five years.
- **The Plan:** Over 200,000 people in the U.S. each year buy Stiga tables from Escalade. When you include the players they play, this probably represents 500,000 people every year, year after year. Each person who buys a table has a table, a place to play, and others to play against. If they or anyone else they play have an Internet connection, they can run an online league as USATT League members. Most successful sports in the country are league oriented, not tournament oriented as USATT is currently designed. See [www.usatt.org/league](http://www.usatt.org/league) for complete info.
- **Status:** Paddle Palace, in conjunction with Escalade, won the bid, and a contract is being worked out. Value of bid is about \$80,000/year. \$5000 of that is in direct payments to USATT, the rest for creating, printing, and distributing flyers and other materials, as well as free advertising in various ways such as Paddle Palace Magazine. Program should be ready to launch by summer.
- **Recommendations:**
  - Be ready to change our way of thinking, and stop thinking of USATT as 8000 USATT members, but as 8000 USATT members and 100,000 or more (future) USATT League members.
  - 85% of all income from the USATT League, and 100% of the first \$100,000, go back into the League to hire a national director and then regional directors. (\$100,000 roughly represents the first 8000 league members.)
  - Board needs to determine if USATT League Members can vote in USATT elections, or if they need to become full members.
  - I need to be formally appointed League Director, and given full authority to run and set rules for the league, subject to oversight by the Executive Director and to USATT rules.



## CLUB PROGRAMS

- **Beginning Classes & Junior Classes**
  - **Vision:** A national network of USATT clubs with real programs for all groups of players, and the transformation of as many new and current clubs as possible into more program-oriented ones, rather than the standard “winner stay on” type we currently have.
  - **Goal:** 100 beginning classes (minimum 20 players) and 100 junior programs (minimum 20 players) within three years.
  - **The Plan:** When large numbers of players are attracted to table tennis, most leave if there are no programs for them. These two programs, along with the USATT League, are designed for this purpose, and are designed to be used in conjunction with other programs.
  - **Status:** These programs are ready to be set up, and ready for use in each of the other club programs. The Primers are online.
  - **Recommendations:** Produce nicer-looking primers, rather than cheap ones stapled together, and be ready to distribute them when/if the demand is there.
  
- **Professional Coaches & Bally Fitness Centers**
  - **Vision:** A nationwide network of Bally’s Table Tennis Centers, spreading to other national fitness centers and other organizations, spurring table tennis growth throughout the country.
  - **Goal:** 10-20 Bally’s Table Tennis Centers the first year, 20-50 added each year until over half of the Bally’s Centers have table tennis programs (200 programs).
  - **The Plan:** USATT will train coaches in 3-day seminars to be full-time USATT certified coaches at Bally’s. (This is for qualified coaches; less qualified ones may need more training.) There are over 400 Bally’s in the U.S., and nearly all have a large room, mostly for aerobics, with room for 5-8 tables. The rooms are essentially never used after 7PM, Mon-Fri, and have many openings on weekends and during the day as well. Coaches will be trained to run a Bally’s table tennis program, with classes, private coaching, leagues, junior training, and open play. Each coach who goes through the program will be matched with a Bally’s in his/her region. Bally’s supplies the tables and facility, and gets membership fees and beverage profits. Coach gets coaching, class and league fees.
  - **Status:** In negotiation with Bally’s officials. Have had several meetings already. Brian Pace, who was a professional coach at a Bally’s in Florida, has helped out.
  - **Recommendations:** As soon as deal is reached with Bally’s, set up an annual 3-day (?) “USATT Coaching Academy” where the USATT coaching staff and I will solicit and train coaches to be full-time coaches at Bally’s or other locations. Later on the program can be duplicated with similar fitness centers and organizations.



- **Full-time Centers**
  - **Vision:** Professional Table Tennis Centers at all major population centers in the USA, and sometimes in smaller areas, much like gymnastic centers, bowling allies, etc.
  - **Goal:** Full-time centers at or near nearly every large city in the U.S., with at least five new full-time centers going up each year.
  - **The Plan:** There are a number of full-time table tennis centers in the U.S., and many of them are financially very successful – but for every successful one, there are several that go under. Each time someone tries to set one up, the wheel is being reinvented. So a Primer needs to be created for those who would like to develop a full-time table tennis center. Such a Primer not only would make a higher percentage of full-time centers successful, but would also spur the growth of new ones by making the path to creation easier. Once the primer is created, this program can be combined with the Professional Coaches program to recruit and train coaches for these centers. When it is shown that these centers are financially feasible, the grown potential is large.
  - **Status:** On hold until I have time to create the Primer and set up the program.
  - **Recommendations:** Keep bugging me to get this done, and then distribute Primers via the Internet, magazine and mailings to coaches and clubs.
  
- **Club Catalyst & Creation Program**
  - **Vision:** The creation of clubs, coaching programs and leagues throughout the country, run locally by state directors, with the ultimate goal being 50 state associations running their own programs.
  - **Goal:** Within five years, a club in 75% of all cities with populations over 50,000, and working state associations in 40 states. The clubs should include leagues, classes and junior programs. (Note: as of 1991, there were 463 cities over 50,000, and only 103 had clubs.)
  - **The Plan:** It starts with a National Director, who appoints a State Director for each state. Larger states may get a Club Director, Coaching Director, and/or League Director as well. Each Director is responsible for creating or affiliating USATT Clubs in each “Population Center” in their state, with clubs to have a league, a coach, a beginning class, and a junior program. “Population Centers” are defined to be cities with a population over 50,000. Later on, the state directors will be asked to create State Associations, but only after there is enough growth and activity in the state to justify and maintain it.
  - **Status:** On hold until I have more time, or someone from headquarters can take it over.
  - **Recommendations:** This program needs to be a priority at some point. It was the key program that increased USATT membership from 5500 to 7500, and clubs from 226 to 301, in the early 1990s. It’s the first step toward state associations.

- **Mass Mailing**
  - **Vision:** Get the 30,000 former USATT members since 1994, all on the USATT computer, back into the membership.
  - **Goal:** 5,000 new USATT members.
  - **The Plan:** Do a mass mailing to all past USATT members. The letter should be a joint letter from the USATT President and a prominent USATT member well known to them – Dan Seemiller? – and should highlight improvements in the sport in recent years. Cost would be about \$2000 for printing 30,000 full-color brochures, and about \$7000 for postage, or a total of \$9000. If we make a profit of \$10 on each membership (that’s conservative), we would need 900 new members to pay for the project, a return of 3% from past members. This does not include future profits from members who renew. More realistically, if we have a 50% annual renewal rate, then we need about 1.5% return (450) to break even.
  - **Status:** On hold until USATT decides to move forward on it. This program will pay for itself, as any business knows that mailings pay for themselves, or they wouldn’t do them. That’s why when you leave many organizations, they periodically send you letters asking you to come back. (I still get renewal letter requests from Discover and Smithsonian Magazines, for example, and I haven’t subscribed to either in over five years; I’ve received at least five renewal letters from USA Tennis since my membership expired 1.5 years ago.)
  - **Recommendations:** Do the mass mailing this year. I can produce the letter and arrange printing and mailing, with the Executive Director overseeing it.
  
- **Regional Training Centers**
  - **Vision:** Regional training centers where each region’s best players and youth players train, maximizing their potential, preparing players for the National Team, and turning USA into a more serious table tennis power.
  - **Goal:** Two Regional Training Centers the first year, and a new one each year after that until there are at least 8 regional training centers, with centers gradually becoming more self-sustaining.
  - **The Plan:** Each center would need to be full-time or equivalent, have a top coach available, and have top players or youth players ready to train there. USATT would pay the salary of the coach, up to \$8,000/year, 40 weeks a year, four days a week, 2.5 hours a day, \$20/hour. The coach (or coaches) would not charge the best players (to be determined by USATT), but would be allowed to bring in top local players who would pay, and would help pay for the coach’s additional salary and allow the program to grow and eventually become independent.
  - **Status:** This plan was already approved and put into operation in July of 2001, with a Regional Training Center Committee in charge. For reasons unknown (but presumably financial), the program was halted after bids were received, and has been on hold ever since.
  - **Recommendations:** Use some of the savings from the cancelled Oakbrook Center to start up two regional training centers to start with, and add at least one more each year until there are 8 of them, finances permitting.

- **USA Pro Tour**
  - **Vision:** A USA Pro Tour, with professional USA players making a living at table tennis from prize money alone.
  - **Goal:** Within five years, professional USA Tour that allows 6-8 USA players to make a living at table tennis from prize money alone.
  - **The Plan:** The plan is to get a plan. The basic idea is that while none of the people on the USATT Board or Elite Committee have any real experience or contacts for putting such a Pro Tour together, there might be USATT members who do. Therefore, we would solicit bids from the membership to grow or transform the current USA Pro Tour from its current status to one that can maintain 6-8 professional USA players. This means, for the weakest player, a minimum of \$30,000/year plus \$500 in expenses per tour stop. This roughly means 26 tour stops each year, with quarterfinalists receiving \$1650 in prize money, or 20 stops, with quarterfinalists receiving \$2000 in prize money. The USATT Elite Committee would put up to \$20,000 in “seed money” for such a bid. If no winning bid is submitted, then no bid will be selected, no money is committed, and the money would be budgeted otherwise at the fall budget meeting. (This program is somewhat outside my jurisdiction, but I hope to help out with it.)
  - **Status:** I will write an article for the magazine and web page to solicit bids, with minimum requirements given. It will be approved in advance by the USATT Elite Athlete Committee before going out. Plan has already been reviewed and approved by Dan Seemiller and Mark Nordby.
  - **Recommendations:** Wait and see if a “winning” bid is received, and go from there. No money is committed to this program unless the Elite Committee finds a bid it deems worthy, and the Board approves the budget for the winning bid.