

GCE Physical Education – Exemplar Materials

Unit 4: The developing Sports Performer (6PE04)

Task 4.2 – International Studies (Table Tennis)

Commentary

This is a very well written task with full referencing. The task explores the social context and place of table tennis in China and has extensive factual detail. The task covers all the expected areas of content but would have benefited from a brief exploration of the typography and climate of the country but this should not distract from the task overall. The author could have also made more critical reference to the possible schools and local community provisions.

The task provides the reader with a feeling for the place of table tennis in the sporting ethos of China and provides detail on the place on table tennis in the wider sports profile. Given the word limit this is an interesting and factually supported task that leaves the reader more knowledgeable about table tennis in China. The inclusion of explanatory footnotes further supports the creditability of the research and provides along with the extensive bibliography a level of academic standing to this task.

It should be noted that the candidate exceeded the word count by 3 words. When assessing this task, the moderator would read up 1000 words and then stop.

Task 4.2 – International Study	Max. word limit adhered to 1003	13/15
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International Study of Table Tennis in China



(<http://nimg.sulekha.com/sports/original700/ma-long-2010-5-29-7-49-23.jpg>)

Ma Long Number 1 in Men's World Ranking

(http://www.ittfranking.com/gen/world/worldM_en.htm)

Background

With an estimated 300 million players, table tennis is the biggest amateur recreational sport in China today. Chinese players have won the men's World Championship 60% of the time since 1959; in the women's competition, they have won all but two of the World Championships since 1971. At the 2008 Olympics, China won all possible medals.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_tennis_in_China)

In the past table tennis has been the used by the Chinese as a way to build and improve international relationships. This was most famously done with the USA and is often referred as to as 'ping pong diplomacy'. This is when Table Tennis players of United States and People's Republic of China toured each other's country in the 1970's. (See Appendix 1)

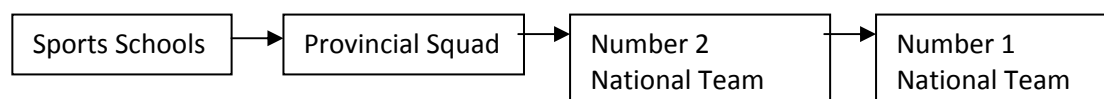
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ping_Pong_Diplomacy)

Summer Olympic Medals per year in Table Tennis (1988-2008) (Men's and Women's Olympic Medals)

Nation 	88 	92 	96 	00 	04 	08 	Total 
 China (CHN)	5	6	8	8	6	8	41
 Chinese Taipei (TPE)	–	–	1	1	–	–	2
 Denmark (DEN)	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
 France (FRA)	–	1	–	1	–	–	2
 Germany (GER)	–	1	1	–	–	1	3
 Hong Kong (HKG)	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
 North Korea (PRK)	–	2	–	–	1	–	3
 Singapore (SIN)	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
 South Korea (KOR)	4	5	2	1	3	2	17
 Sweden (SWE)	1	1	–	1	–	–	3
 Yugoslavia (YUG)	2	–	–	–	–	–	2

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Olympic_medalists_in_table_tennis)

Player Pathways



China's sports system was established in the 1950s on the Soviet model and was supporting 23,000 athletes in 2007. Table Tennis has a pyramid player pathway structure, sports schools at the bottom feed provincial teams, who in turn provide athletes for the elite national squads. (<http://www.peopleforum.cn/viewthread.php?tid=34294>)

China has 3,000 state-run sports academies with nearly 400,000 youngsters that are picked as early as 6 years old. The criticism of this system is that it focuses on elite performance and Olympic gold's and works to the detriment of grassroots activity in a country where less than 30% of the population regularly participate in sport. China's athletic success has been built on vast numbers of athletes from peasant stock who were willing to grind through the state sports system and have a shot at success. But parents are becoming increasingly reluctant to turn over their offspring to state academies. (See footnote 1) (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1813961,00.html#ixzz12p2SwltF>)

Youngsters are identified at early age for their physical abilities in table tennis. (See footnote 2) They are then taken away from their families and placed into state-run athletics academies where they train and live. Trials are held annually to bring in new athletes to replace those who fail to make the grade as well as to allow coaches of provincial and national teams to scout out the talent. (<http://www.canada.com/topics/sports/>)

"I have never bought a single bat or pair of shoes since I started playing table tennis at the age of five. Everything was taken care of by the country and I have never worried about other problems, I only need to concentrate on table tennis." (Yining 2006) (See footnote 3) (<http://www.canada.com/topics/sports/>)

An example of this system in work is with table tennis star Chen Qi. (See footnote 4) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chen_Qi_\(table_tennis\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chen_Qi_(table_tennis)))

Footnote 1 - The one-child per family policy promoted in China forbids couples from having more than one child in both rural and urban areas. Parents are becoming less willing to turn their children over to the sports system. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_one_child)

Footnote 2 – Youngsters are selected from national tests looking for good co-ordination, fast reaction time and the right body structure for table tennis.

Footnote 3 - Zhang Yining winner of 4 Olympic gold medals, 9 World Championships, and 4 World Cup wins.

Footnote 4 - Former Olympic gold medallist and ranked 11th in the ITTF men's player ranking. Chen Qi began to receive training in Nantong Spare-time Sports School in 1990. He became a member of the provincial team at the age of 12. He joined the No. 2 national team in 1999 and then the No. 1 national team in October 2002.

Competition Pathways

Table tennis is a popular sport in China and it records very large TV ratings. The Chinese Super League is the top division of a large league system. The Super League is well organized and strongly supported by the Chinese Table Tennis Association (CTTA) and CCTV-5. Each season involves 16 club teams, 8 male and 8 female. (See footnote 5)

(<http://www.totalsportsasia.com/>)

The league system in China has many levels. The Chinese `A`, `B` and `C` League are in effect the second, third and fourth divisions. 24 Men's Teams and 24 Women's Teams comprised the Chinese `A` League for 2010. 32 Men's Teams and 32 Women's Teams comprised the Chinese `B` and `C` League for 2010. (See footnote 6)

(<http://www.tabletennis.gr/chinese-national-league-opens-doors-to-foreign-teams.html>)

Chinese National Table Tennis Training Centre

This venue has some of the best facilities in the world and has been the main training centre for the Chinese National Table Tennis Squad since 1992. (Footnote 7) The centre has carried out successful holding camps for the National Table Tennis Team before important competitions; three times for Olympic Games and seven times for the World Table Tennis Championships. (Footnote 8) (<http://www.cntttc.org/index.asp>)



Chinese Table Tennis Training Centre Facilities

Footnote 5 - The season runs from June to September every year and includes the best Chinese players including: Zhang Yi-Ning, Ma Lin, Wang Hao, Wang Nan

Footnote 6 - At the end of proceedings the winners of the `A` League meets the team that finished in eighth place in the Chinese Super League for the right to compete in the 2011 Chinese Super League whilst the last five placed teams are relegated to the Chinese `B` League. The top five teams in the `B` league are promoted while the last five teams are relegated to the `C` league. In order to compete in the Chinese Leagues, a minimum of four players per team must be registered.

Footnote 7 - The Chinese National Table Tennis Training Centre is situated in the city of Shijiazhuang, in Hebei province. The centre has many large standard training halls, a 2,000 seated arena, gym, sauna room, interpreters in all major languages, three star hotel, and dining room with top chefs preparing well-planned meals to meet the needs of athletes in the centre.

Footnote 8 - After National training, the national team took part in several the world competitions. They won 38 world championships, 15 Olympic Game gold medals and a number of silver/ bronze medals.

Funding Agencies and Governing Bodies

The main source of money for sport in China is the government but because it is a communist country specific figures are well guarded. After the award of the Beijing 2008 Olympics the sports system went into overdrive. After 2001, the annual budget for the Sports Ministry increased to \$714 million, from \$428 million. Each of China's gold medals in Beijing cost the state upwards of \$7 million and with four gold medals for table tennis in Beijing that's at least \$28 million if not more because table tennis is the national sport and have a high number of top international stars.

(http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121945113954865415.html?mod=hps_us_inside_today)

In the eight years to 2006 China's total spending on sports increased 149% to \$1.35 billion. With the high cost of state funded sport burdening the government, many sports decided to take the professionalization road including table tennis. (See footnote 9)

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport_in_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China)

The CTTA is now a national non-governmental, nonprofit sports organization and represents China in the International Table Tennis Federation. It is the main governing body and has five special committees. (See footnote 10) They are funded by sponsors, membership fees and merchandise.

(http://www.chinaculture.org/library/2008-01/25/content_31879.htm)

With the professionalization of table tennis more firms became interested in sponsorship because of the high TV audiences. For example players in the Chinese super league can earn \$100,000 a year in salaries from the Government, club wages and endorsements. (See footnote 11)

(http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bw/2009-05/25/content_7937576.htm)

Footnote 9 - Sport associations became profit-making entities and a club system came into being; professional leagues formed, improving China's sports environment; and commercial management.

Footnote 10 - They are the Coaches Committee, the Judges Committee, the Equipment Committee, the Research and Development Committee and the Youth Committee.

Footnote 11 - The league is sponsored by 361° Co Ltd, China Central Television sport and Entertainment Co Ltd and the CTTA. The three partners also carry out other activities, including table tennis market research, league promotion, exploration and cultivation of potential talents, and professional table tennis education.

Disabled Table Tennis

Chinese Paralympic Table Tennis Medal Table

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total of Chinese Medals	Total no of medals available
2008	13	6	3	22	72
2004	7	3	3	13	84
2000	4	2	1	7	90
1996	3	0	2	5	84
1992	2	2	1	5	90
1988	3	0	4	7	111
1984	0	1	0	1	117

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabletennisatthe2008SummerParalympics>

As the table shows China has only recently become a disabled sports power by getting 13 out of 24 gold medals available in 2008. China has been slowly improving its disabled provision since the award of the Olympics. In 2001 the Government invested heavily in disabled sport particularly in Olympic disciplines. The results in the past are probably down to China's whole view of disabled people.

"In the past, people despised the disabled. They thought they were all beggars, just asking for money. Many said they felt totally rejected by family members and the community. They spoke of being labelled a burden and even of being blamed for their disability. There are slow signs of progress. Many in the Chinese government are now trying to provide more opportunities for the disabled and to challenge negative views." (Cheeley 2007) (See footnote 12)

<http://www.apparelyzed.com/forums/>

Footnote 12 - Dr Rob Cheeley is the general director of "Bless China International", a non-governmental organization that works with Yunnan's poor and with the disabled.

Evaluation

Table tennis in China, from grassroots to elite level is run like a production line consistently producing world class athletes in men's, women's and disabled. The results speak for themselves with China swooping every competition on offer. The system is very elitist and focuses only on the top athletes. This has led to recreational sport not being played enough in China and there are growing concerns over fitness particularly in the poorer communities. The high cost of producing medals is becoming a drain on state funds and many argue it is outdated in its methods.

Is what China doing ethical right? Although a few elite athletes will become sporting icons and their lives changed from 'rags to riches' for both themselves and their families, many will not make it through the state system and their education, family life and youth can be lost forever. What is the true cost of sporting success in china its \$714 million a year or is it costing China its childhood?

Word Count – 1003

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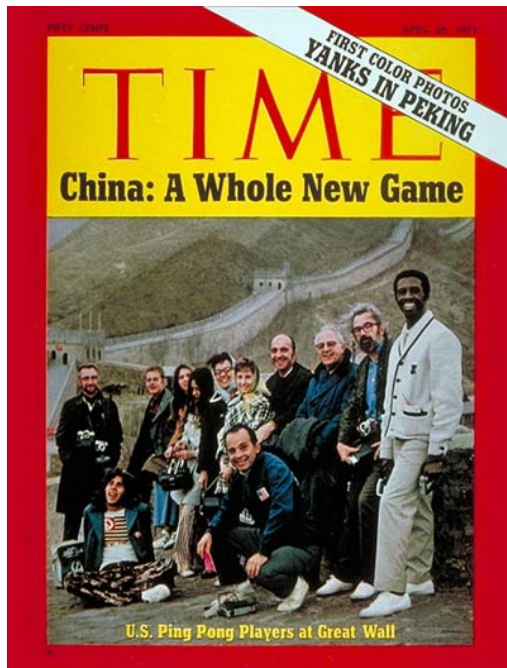
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Appendices

Appendix 1



(<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,902866,00.html#ixzz14WXojiAb>)

AMERICAN NOTES: Ping Pong and Reality

Monday, Apr. 26, 1971

O China, O China, How restlessly you tremble and stand astounded . . . —Ping, in Puccini's Turandot

A letter writer to a British newspaper last week enthusiastically observed that Giacomo Puccini showed uncanny foresight when he named two characters in his opera Ping and Pong. Perhaps so. The China of the opera was a place gilded with unreality; but what excited Americans last week about the astounding venture in Ping Pong diplomacy was that China was becoming real.

After more than two decades of frozen mutual hostility, the U.S. and China were beginning to talk and thus in a sense to see each other once more. China began to capture the American imagination, as it has many times before, and all sorts of Americans—including the President—started to talk about traveling there. In a world of diplomatic and military deadlocks, the sudden breach in the Great Wall was a relief.

(<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,902866,00.html#ixzz14WXojiAb>)