

# LEAGUE TALKING POINTS

## 'Slamming Good Time'

By Steve Rivera

It's about friendships, fun and a few forehand slams when it comes to the Southern Arizona Table Tennis Association.

The latter just comes with the territory—more often than not—as the SATTA continues to grow at an eye-pleasing pace. The first league matches involved 19 participants in April of 2008.

"Since then the league is quickly becoming a hotspot for table tennis participation and has grown more than fivefold, contributing to 719 matches to the USATT league match count," said SATTA president Misha Chernobelskiy. "The Southern Arizona Table Tennis League is now one of the largest active table tennis leagues in the Southwest Region, now ranked No. 29 in the nation."

And, there's plenty of room to grow. The SATTA is still in the early stages of promoting the sport via media opportunities and will be seeking to join the City of Tucson Parks & Recreation department, with the hope of reaching more players.

"If we do get in with the Tucson Parks & Recreation that would be a great step forward," said Chernobelskiy. "It is a hope that we'll be able to accomplish that goal in the near future."

Still, word of mouth about the program and the sport has helped the SATTA gain

credibility and participants. Contributing to the league's success has been the website ([www.sattaonline.com](http://www.sattaonline.com)), one that is continually updated with current and timely information as it looks back at recent events and to future competitions.

"The tournaments are well-organized, well-advertised within the limited circles and we have a fantastic personalized website full of good information," said SATTA member Sreeram Parameswaran. "Successes are well-documented and people well-feted. It engenders a community feeling within the ping pong circle."

Chernobelskiy had a vision when he started the league more than a year ago. They included:

- provide a relaxed environment while

gaining experience;

- get players rated without future tournament participation, perhaps getting recreational players to later join the USATT;

- get player ratings updated on a timely fashion, notifying them of their rating in timely fashion.

In addition to the vision, Chernobelskiy hopes the newly formed Friendship Cup continues its initial success. The Friendship Cup—teams from area clubs competing against one another—"is designed to promote a healthy lifestyle within the Southern Arizona senior (55+) table tennis community," Chernobelskiy said.

The initial tournament had 22 participants via five teams.

"The Friendship Cup is off to a good start and has potential to be successful," Jeremiah Sbarra said. "I think after the first year we will have a better handle on how it will all work out." If the first year of SATTA is any indication it will work out just fine.



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