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## **TMS Leader Visits College Table Tennis Championships**

Anders Thunstrom observed the action Saturday at the 2014 TMS College Table Tennis Championships and liked what he saw in Monroeville, Pennsylvania.

But the managing director of TMS International, the marketing company of the International Table Tennis Federation, isn't satisfied. Thunstrom wants to take the Olympic sport to the next level on hundreds of college campuses in the USA and Canada.

"You have to lift up the sport," said the native of Sweden as he watched scores of college players fight for points at the three-day tournament near Pittsburgh. "You need resources."

Thunstrom said his company wants to work with the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association, major sponsors like Butterfly, Newgy Industries and others to build the sport at more than 150 schools in North America. "Our responsibility is to bring income to the sport."

It can't happen overnight. As part of his visit to the April 4-6 tournament at The Club Sport and Health, Thunstrom will talk with National Collegiate Table Tennis Association leaders, players and others connected with the sport. He plans to report his findings to ITTF officials and make recommendations to the NCTTA later this year. "I will send recommendations to the NCTTA about how to improve."

Thunstrom is pretty familiar with table tennis as a former player and coach. "I've been around table tennis my entire life," said the 52-year-old resident of Malmo, Sweden. In 1992-93, he served as head coach of the Swedish National Table Tennis Team that won medals at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.

A former champion in European Youth leagues decades ago, Anders no longer plays the sport. But he's determined to see table tennis grow over the next year as a TMS International leader.

"We have to figure out a way to do this," Thunstrom said.

Besides bringing the name TMS International to the event as a major sponsor in 2014, TMS supplied bright red floor mats, an excellent surface for the speedy players. As live streaming video captured the wicked spins and tiny white balls hitting speeds of 70 mph, "the product has to look sharp," he said.

For the TMS executive, it marked the first time he's attended a college table tennis tournament in the

United States. Last summer, he watched the U.S. Table Tennis Open in Las Vegas. Asked to compare the two tournaments, Anders said bigger isn't always better. In some instances, the larger U.S. Open tournament in Nevada lacked umpires, he said. The TMS College Table Tennis Championships was well-staffed with umpires, he noted.

In the future, he hopes to see other organizations like the United States Table Tennis Association do more to put programs in place to develop the sport and table tennis athletes.

Again, it won't be easy. College table tennis is trying to compete with more popular televised sports like football, basketball, baseball, hockey and soccer. "College sports in North America is the biggest in the world," Anders said.

Growing up in Sweden, he's aware of high-profile professional athletes in his native land. Former world heavyweight boxing champ Ingemar Johanssen was a well-known sports figure in the late 1950s and early 1960s. "Ingo" was from Sweden, and so is world-class tennis star Bjorn Borg. Anders wants to see greater recognition for stars in collegiate table tennis circles.

NCTTA leaders welcomed Thunstrom's visit to see North America's best 250 table tennis players. "We're delighted Anders is spending a couple of days here and getting an up-close look at our tournament in the Keystone State," said NCTTA President Willy Leparulo. "We value his recommendations to make our wonderful sport even better."

For more information on TMS International, go to <http://www.tmsin.com>

*The 2014 TMS College Table Tennis Championships is hosted by the [National Collegiate Table Tennis Association](#) and the Visit Monroeville and is one of the most competitive table tennis tournaments in North America featuring 6 events: Men's and Women's Singles and Doubles, and Men's/Coed Teams, Women's Teams. The event is sponsored by TMS International, Newgy Industries, Butterfly.*

*Players and spectators alike will enjoy a jam-packed weekend of table tennis at the [2014 College Table Tennis Championships](#). The event starts Friday April 4th and continues to Sunday April 6th at the Club Sport and Health in Monroeville, Pennsylvania.*

### **About NCTTA**

The National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA) is a non-profit organization established exclusively for promoting the sport of table tennis at the college level. As the national governing body for college table tennis in the United States and Canada, NCTTA organizes intercollegiate competition throughout North America. [www.nctta.org](http://www.nctta.org)

### **About USA Table Tennis**

Headquartered in Colorado Springs, USATT is the national organizing body for table tennis in the United States, serving 9,000+ members and nearly 300 clubs. USATT sanctions 200+ events a year including the US Open and US Nationals. USATT is affiliated with the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), as well as the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). [www.usatt.org](http://www.usatt.org) & [tabletennis.teamusa.org](http://tabletennis.teamusa.org)

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