



**CONTACT:** Andy Kanengiser

**PHONE:** (800) 581-6770

**EMAIL:** [championships@nctta.org](mailto:championships@nctta.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**March 28, 2014**

## **Table Tennis Stars Head to Pennsylvania for 2014 TMS College Championships**

College Table Tennis invades Monroeville Pennsylvania on April 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>

But TWU figures to be a fierce battle in the bustling Pittsburgh suburb as stellar teams like Mississippi College, New York University, Princeton, Southern Cal, Toronto and San Jose State bring their "A" games to the table during the April 4-6 tournament.

TWU head coach Jasna Rather guides a Rams team that's won an unprecedented ten straight coed national championships. Led by 2013 men's singles champ Emil Santos, the Fort Worth school brings an extraordinary bunch of student-athletes with amazing spins to the speed-driven games.

But Rather takes nothing for granted. "Our players are happy to represent Texas Wesleyan and there are many very strong schools that we need to try to win against."

The TWU Rams captured four out of the six national championships at the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association's April 2013 tournament in Rockford, Illinois. "We hope that our athletes stay healthy and we wish we do well at the Nationals," Rather said. "If we win one of the six titles, it would be great."

One of TWU's outstanding players, Yahao Zhang, "was in top form lately, so we hope he continues to play well," Rather said. Bringing 300 of North America's top table tennis players to Pennsylvania for three thrilling days of table tennis, the tournament will be the final stop for Zhang before he leaves for the World Championship in Japan in late April.

Mississippi College table tennis coach Ken Qiu looks for good things to happen with his squad with potent players like Cheng Li, Zhiqiao "Joe" Xie, and Yichi Zhang, all natives of China. Making its seventh consecutive trip to the national championships, the MC team, he said "has the strongest team in its history this year with new players joining in."

A 5,000-student Baptist-affiliated university in Central Mississippi, MC's coed team finished No. 2 at the NCTTA championship games in 2012 in Plano, Texas and again in 2013 in Rockford, Illinois. "Our team will try its best to get some national titles. We are hoping for great success in the nationals this year."

MC's former captain who launched the squad in 2007, Qiu anticipates "great challenges between and individual players" in the Keystone State. The Mississippi College squad consists of five natives of China and one American, MC student Tyler Brogdan of Birmingham, Alabama.

From coast to coast, a lineup of awesome collegiate table tennis players travels to western Pennsylvania for the NCTTA tournament.

Back to back Northeast Regional champs, NYU, is led by 2012 U.S. Olympic team member Michael Landers of Long Island. NYU returns to its third TMS National Championships in a row.

NYU is "the highest seeded non-scholarship team in the competition," said standout Kenneth Lim. "People will be particularly interested in how we do. And, to be honest, we're feeling pretty confident."

The NYU players looked solid in recent practices. But other schools like Tulane, Duke and Governors State will put up a fight, Lim said. The NYU women's team played without captain Wenhui Toh due to an injury at the regionals, but she's back in action. "I'm sure they will go far," said Lim, who grew up in Singapore.

Grant Li is the star for the USC coed team in Los Angeles. He was part of last year's NCTTA doubles champs. "This year's USC team is a bit different from last year's, but it is still a great team." Newcomers Victor Leung and Kevin Korb add spice to the Trojans. "We have all been looking forward to the nationals since the beginning of the school year," says Grant, 19, a sophomore from Acton, Massachusetts.

Peter Li, 21, is the sophomore sensation from Laurel, Maryland who dominates at the University of California at Berkeley. Preparing for the Nationals takes hard work. "We sweated through extensive training sessions and scrutinized video replays of our performance," Peter said. Li thanks USC's unsung heroes not competing in Monroeville, people like Samson Su and Oliver He motivated the Cal Bears at practices. Qing Wong used his professional equipment to film and analyze USC table tennis players all season.

"It promises to be another superb tournament bringing players with unbelievable skill levels to Monroeville," NCTTA President Willy Leparulo said. "We thank our hosts and salute our volunteers."

*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)

###