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Women's Table Tennis Teams Flock to National Championships

Women's table tennis teams are alive and well on college campuses across North America.

The growing list of new women's teams heading to the 2014 TMS College Table Tennis Championships in Pennsylvania is simply amazing.

Whether it's Ivy Leaguer Princeton in New Jersey, Tulane in New Orleans, Florida State in Tallahassee or Texas A&M in College Station, new women's squads are emerging in 2013-14.

Chartered in 1746, Princeton is America's 4th oldest college. This year, it will go down in the record books at the prestigious research university - the Tigers have a super women's table tennis team.

The Princeton squad is led by Ariel Hsing of San Jose, California. Ariel is the three-time U.S. women's table tennis champion, a 2012 U.S. Olympian who is currently ranked No. 83 in the ITTF women's world rankings. That's awesome for the Princeton freshman!

Another big-time freshman player is Shirley Fu of Burnaby, British Columbia. The left hander is a two-time Canadian women's table tennis champion. Born in China, she moved to Canada at age 10. She's considering computer science as her major.

Other women on the stellar team include Marisa Chow of Orinda, California and Robin Li of Plainsboro, New Jersey. Marisa plans to study computer science, while Robin is expected to study economics at Princeton.

This is believed to be the first time that Princeton fielded a women's team. The last Princeton woman to compete at the NCTTA championship games was Sarah Zheng back in 2008. The Tigers qualified for the Nationals by its uncontested win in the New Jersey Division and then went unbeaten at the TMS Northeast Regionals.

The Florida State Lady Seminoles are also making noise with their women's table tennis team in Tallahassee. Olmo Zavala, a standout player at FSU and in Mexico in recent years, serves as the squad's coach. The team in Florida's capital city has a definite international flavor.

Sisi Dong, an educational psychology major from China, is passionate about the Olympic sport, and is excited to be making the trip with her FSU teammates to the nationals.

Sisi began playing the game at age 10, and stopped until discovering “this amazing team” at FSU. “They train people formally and everybody loves table tennis, so I picked up my paddle and started training again.”

Others on the FSU squad include Yazmin Valdez of Mexico, Nina Steinhäuser of Germany and Weijie Xie of China. Yazmin is married to Olmo. “We really love table tennis. We go to training every Monday and Friday. None of us has a rating of over 1300, but we help each other,” Sisi Dong said.

Nina, who seeks a master’s degree in international affairs at FSU, began playing the game at age 11 in her hometown of Stuttgart, Germany. She’s played on men’s teams many times before. “I’m very glad to be on a women’s team for the first time.”

Tulane’s women’s team was the only female squad competing at the NCTTA’s Dixie Division tournament at Mississippi College in February. The Green Wave team did well at the regionals in Atlanta to punch their ticket to Pennsylvania.

With strong teams like Texas Wesleyan returning once again, the competition for the women’s 2014 title at the games near Pittsburgh April 4-6 should be mighty fierce.

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

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 & tabletennis.teamusa.org

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