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2010 College Table Tennis National Championships

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WEBSITE: <http://www.nctta.org/champs/2010>

****NEWS RELEASE****

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Acrobatic Action and Temper Time in Men's Singles Round of 16

The unprecedented depth of the Men's Singles draw here at the 2010 College Table Tennis National Championships was underscored by the round of 16 match between Tahl Leibovitz (Queens) and Fernando Yamazato (Lindenwood). Spectators expected a thrilling battle, with Leibovitz a top international Paralympic player and Yamazato (to Lindenwood by way of Brazil) possessing a lofty, 2500+ US rating.

Rallies were clearly longer and more dramatic than normal; Tahl's spectacular all-around game and Fernando's acrobatic loops made for fantastic points! Game one, a tight affair, was taken by Yamazato 12-10. Tahl collected a yellow card for the last of three outbursts, smashing his racket into the floor in disgust after a missed backhand loop, and his play really picked up after this. Could it have been an intentional attempt to fire himself up? After this first game, Tahl remarked to a spectator, "He just returns the ball, and I missed 15 times."

Game two was a total reversal of fortunes, as Leibovitz totally baffled his opponent with a variety of serves and spectacular follow-up attacks. It was all "Tahl time" in a quick, 11-1 game victory. At the start of the game three, Tahl again used his service and third ball loops to sprint to a 4-0 lead, punctuating each point with vocalizations. The lead stretched to 7-2 in his favor.

At this point, Yamazato looked to make the tactical decision to fall back from the table, forcing Leibovitz to hit more balls and extending the points. His incredible foot speed and quickness made this a prudent move.

Fernando got the score to 7-10, and Tahl was getting agitated, asking, "Why am I constantly missing shots I never miss?" From here, the Lindenwood player won two points in the short game followed by a long, counter topspin rally to reach 10-10. The strategy of backing off won the game for Yamazato, 12-10, to take a two games to one lead.

Leibovitz was clearly disgusted by his failure to close out the previous game, and he returned to the table in body only, his mind still stuck in game three. Game four flew by, 11-0 for Yamazato without much effort from his opponent. The instant Tahl left the court barrier, his racket was

snapped in half, head decapitated from handle! Despite the disappointing conclusion, kudos to both players for some of the most spectacular rallies of the entire tournament!

After the match, Yamazato said regarding his strategy for the later parts of the match, "I just tried to get as many balls back on the table", and "I knew I had the advantage after the third game".

Yamazato will face Princeton's Adam Hugh in the Mens Quarterfinals in what should be another fantastic encounter.

Spectators can enjoy a weekend full of table tennis at the 2010 College Table Tennis Championships which starts Friday April 9th and continues to Sunday April 11th at the Center Sports Complex in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

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

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