

San Diego Table Tennis Association



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****NEWS RELEASE****

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Ping Pong Diplomacy 2013: San Diego Falls to Mexico in Inaugural "Friendship Games"



Baja, Mexico Roster: Jessica Cuellar, Herrera Fernanda, Pablo Gastelum, Sophia Gree, Lira Karolina, Bryan Leon, Santi Luna, Green Namy, Adolpho Torres, German Torres, Elisa Zuniga, Uriel Zuniga.

San Diego Roster: Shariq Ansari, Kim Chodha, David Flores, James Kahn, Benum Kazemi, Christian Lillieroos, Abraham Mangapit, Mike Meier, James Neilsen, Daryl Sterling, Joe Romanosky, Chip Yang.

ENESEDA, BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO – First, the United States faced off in Beijing against China in the original “Ping Pong Diplomacy” in 1971. Then in 2012 USA competed alongside North Korea, Russia, and others in the Qatar Peace and Sport Cup in Doha. This time, Ping Pong Diplomacy 2013 occurred much closer to home.

Organized by James Kahn, Chairman of the San Diego Table Tennis Association (SDTTA), and Juan Gallegos, Head Table Tennis Coach of the Mexican state of Baja California, the Inaugural “Friendship Games” was held Saturday, March 16, at the Baja California Institute of Sport and Physical Culture’s Table Tennis Development Center in Ensenada, Mexico. Twelve athletes from each of the two associations competed in the event, which included both singles and doubles. All matches were officiated by an umpire and assistant umpire.

Using the current best-of-five Olympic format (four singles matches, 1 doubles match) with four teams of three from each association, Baja defeated San Diego 24-16 in overall match wins. San Diego came back to win the doubles only event 5-3 later in the day. However, Baja secured the overall victory 27-21.

“Our trip was a great success,” Kahn said. “Play was superb by all and everyone conducted themselves with great decorum. We were good Ambassadors and even showed the gracefulness to lose a closely contested day of matches. We will continue to foster our special relationship with the Baja Club. They are good for us and we are good for them.”

Since 2008, the Baja Club has participated in the SDTTA’s weekly Thursday tournament, overcoming a five-hour one-way, travel time. That includes a ninety-minute drive to the American border (Tijuana, Mexico/San Ysidro, CA), enduring up to three hours wait at the border, then another thirty minutes to San Diego’s Balboa Park Activity Center (2145 Park Boulevard).

Kahn looks for this matchup to continue for years to come.

“This will begin a regular set of exchange matches with them and I look forward to hosting them here soon,” Kahn said.