

February 2019

ROBERT GARDOS



Photo: Ireneusz Kanabrodzki

Fact Sheet

- **Nickname:** Robi
- **Nationality:** Austrian
- **Home club:** SPO Rouen, France
- **Born** Jan. 16, 1979, in Budapest, Hungary
- **Started playing table tennis** at a Budapest club where his father was a coach
- **Moved to Austria** in 1993
- **Singles and mixed doubles gold medalist** at the 1993 European Youth Championships
- **Doubles gold medalist** at the 2012 and 2018 European Championships
- **Three-time Olympian**, 2008, 2012, and 2016
- **World Tour player**, 2012-present
- **Current ITTF world ranking:** 52
- **Highest ranking:** 18 (March 2015)
- **First time playing** at a U.S. tournament
- **Style:** Offensive, backhand orientation
- **Blade:** Timo Boll ALC
- **Rubber:** Butterfly Tenergy 05 forehand and backhand
- **Speaks** German, Hungarian, Spanish, and English

April 2019

OLAYINKA AIYELUMO



Photo: Will Shortz

Fact Sheet

- **Nickname: Dotun (DOH-tun)** (a shortening of his middle name)
- **Born Dec. 13, 1984, in Lagos, Nigeria**
- **Started playing table tennis at age 8 — on the street**
- **Professional table tennis player and coach in Hasselt, Belgium**
- **#1 player for the Hasselt TTC, competing in the Belgian Super League in 2019-20**
- **Highest ITTF ranking: #512 (May 2018)**
- **Estimated U.S. rating: 2530**
- **Style: Offensive, heavy spin**
- **Blade: Joola**
- **Rubber: Joola Maxxx 500 (forehand), Joola Rhyzm (backhand)**
- **First time competing in the United States**
- **Personal: Married with three sons (ages 4, 8 and 12); enjoys blues**
- **As a child he inscribed on his table tennis blade: “One day I will be a professional table tennis player in Europe”**

May 2019

EUGENE WANG



Photo: Rich London

Fact Sheet:

- **Born Wang Zhen, Nov. 13, 1985, in Shijiazhuang, China**
- **Immigrated to Canada in 2004**
- **Home: Ottawa, Ontario**
- **Started playing table tennis at age 6; professional since age 11**
- **ITTF ranking: 227; highest: 55 (Dec. 2016)**
- **Two-time Olympian for Canada, 2012 and 2016**
- **Three-time U.S. Open champion, 2012, 2013 and 2018**
- **Winner, North American Tour, 2014**
- **USATT rating: 2758; highest: 2822**
- **Style: Shakehands attack**
- **Rubber: Butterfly Tenergy 05, forehand and backhand**
- **Five-time champion at the Westchester Open**
- **When not training, enjoys movies and playing soccer**

May 2019

MAKANJUOLA KAZEEM



Photo: Emmanuel Ndubuisi

Fact Sheet

- **Born:** Dec. 20, 1987, in Lagos, Nigeria
- **Home club:** Cagliari, Italy
- **Started playing table tennis at age 17**
- **Previously played football, but liked table tennis more**
- **ITTF ranking:** 360
- **2015 African men's doubles champion (with Aruna Quadri)**
- **Bronze medalist at the 2013 Lagos International Classics**
- **USATT rating:** 2662
- **Quarterfinalist at the June 2017 Westchester Open**
- **Style:** All-round
- **Rubbers:** Butterfly Tenergy 05, forehand and backhand
- **Married with two children**
- **Speaks English, Yoruba, and a little Italian**

June 2019

KAI ZHANG



Fact Sheet

- Born June 22, 1997, in Beijing, China
- Started playing table tennis at age 6
- Winner of the Beijing Games at 13 in both singles and doubles
- Moved to the U.S. in 2012 (age 15)
- Champion, Canadian and Portuguese Junior Opens, 2015
- Record 21-time winner of the Westchester Open
- Second-year student, Binghamton University, majoring in business
- 2018 NCTTA men's table tennis champion
- Became U.S. citizen in April 2019
- USATT rating: 2644
- Highest: 2719
- Blade: Viscaria
- Rubbers: DHS Neo 3 (forehand), Butterfly Tenergy 05 (backhand)
- Will play professionally for TTC GW Bad Hamm, Germany, 2019-20
- Fun fact: Loves karaoke
- Goal: To represent the United States at the 2020 Olympics

July 2019

JISHAN LIANG



Photo: Glen Randmer

Fact Sheet:

- **USATT rating: 2690**
- **Highest rating: 2712 (Sept. 2017)**
- **Born Nov. 8, 1991, in Tianjin, China (27 years old)**
- **Came to the U.S. in 2011; U.S. citizen since 2018**
- **Home: Cary, N.C.**
- **Started table tennis at age 7 when a coach selected him at school**
- **Winner of the Cary Cup, Badger Cup, and Arnold Challenge**
- **Three-time champion of the Westchester Open; 12-time runner-up**
- **NCTTA national men's singles champion, 2017 and 2019**
- **Blade: Butterfly Innerforce ZLC; rubber: Dignics 05 (both sides)**
- **When not training and playing table tennis, enjoys travel**
- **Recently became a father**
- **Fun fact: car's license plate number is 6666666**
- **Goal: to represent the U.S. at the 2020 Olympics**

August 2019

JIAN LI



Photo: Rich London

Fact Sheet:

- **USATT rating: 2574**
- **Highest rating: 2692 (March 2017)**
- **Born: Aug. 13, 1988, in Shandong Province, China**
- **Started playing table tennis at age 8 at the urging of his father**
- **Moved to the U.S. in 2015**
- **Home: Fresh Meadows, N.J.**
- **Full-time coach at the Topspin Table Tennis Club in Hillsborough, N.J.**
- **Winner of the Arnold Challenge, 2016 and 2017**
- **Three-time champion of the Westchester Open; seven-time runner-up**
- **Player he most admires: Ding Song**
- **Blade: Koji Matsushita Offensive**
- **Rubber: Hurricane 3 (forehand), Spectol (pips-out)(backhand)**
- **Style: Combination chopper/smasher**
- **When not coaching and playing table tennis, enjoys music**
- **Surprising fact: “I think my guitar talent is better than my ping-pong”**
- **Goal: to teach students to be their best**

September 2019

JUAN LIU



Photo: Glen Randmer

Fact Sheet:

- **U.S. Open champion, 2012 & 2018; U.S. Nationals champion, 2018**
- **USATT rating: 2688**
- **Born: Feb. 14, 1985, in Hubei Province, China**
- **Started playing table tennis at age 7; entered a government-run table tennis academy at 13**
- **Moved to the U.S. in 2011 to marry her long-distance boyfriend**
- **Became a U.S. citizen in 2016**
- **Home: Flushing, Queens, N.Y.**
- **Westchester Open champion, July and August 2019, only woman ever to win**
- **Rubber: Hurricane (forehand), Tenenergy 05 (backhand)**
- **Style: All-round offensive**
- **Trains six days a week at the New York Indoor Sports Club (Queens)**
- **Mother of a five-year-old boy, Eason**
- **When not playing table tennis, enjoys movies and food**
- **Goal: to represent the U.S. at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics**

October 2019

BOBOYE OYENIYAN



Photo: Will Shortz

Fact Sheet

- **Born:** Jan. 10, 1990, in Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria
- **Started playing table tennis at age 12 on a table his dad rented out; played at a professional club for the first time at 15**
- **Quarterfinalist at the 2015 Nigeria Open; top 16 in 2014**
- **Highest world ranking: #214 (2014)**
- **Moved to Ilha do Pico, Azores, Portugal, in November 2015**
- **Plays and coaches for the club Grupo Desportivo Toledos**
- **Heroes: Timo Boll and Ma Long**
- **Blade: Joola Nobilis; Rubbers: Joola Rhyzer 48/50**
- **Married with two daughters, ages 4 and 1**
- **Speaks English, Yoruba, and a little Portuguese**
- **This is his first visit to the United States**
- **Goal: “I want to go back to my home (Nigeria) when I quit playing, train some kids in the European style, and have my own farm, raising animals — to be a blessing to my people and to share the skills and experience I have acquired in the Western world.”**

November 2019

ALGUETTI BROTHERS



Adar, Sharon and Gal Alguetti (L-R)

Photo: Will Shortz

- **Born:** Dec. 7, 1999 (Adar), May 14, 2001 (twins Sharon & Gal) — all three in San Diego, CA
- **Home:** Tenafly, NJ
- **USATT ratings:** 2530, 2638 and 2624, respectively
- **All started playing table tennis at ages 7-8.** Adar: “My dad was playing for fun at a local club, and one day I was tired of watching.”
- **Gal is 2019 U.S. men’s doubles national champion, U.S. Nationals U21 singles finalist, and Canada Open junior teams champion**
- **Sharon is the 2019 junior men’s singles champion; also four-time champion of the Westchester Open — one of only two American-born winners**
- **Adar won the National Team Trials Tournament twice (2017 and 2018)**
- **Sharon and Gal are first-year students at Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business; Adar is a third-year student at NYU’s Stern School of Business**
- **How are they different?** Gal — “I am more organized and creative”; Adar — “More mature and independent”; Sharon — “I’m the crazy one. :)”
- **How competitive are they?** Adar: “We are very tight with each other, laugh and joke about anything. We grew up as best friends, and we preferred getting along than fighting. On the court it’s every man for himself.”

December 2019

KOKOU FANNY



Photo: Glen Randmer

Fact Sheet

- **Born:** April 15, 1987, in Lomé, Togo
- **Friends in Africa** call him **Dodji (DOH-jee)** (his middle name)
- **Home:** Pleasantville, NY (since December 2015)
- **Profession:** Table tennis coach
- **USATT rating:** 2447 (highest: 2472)
- **ITTF ranking:** 217
- **Started playing table tennis** at age 16
- **Six-time champion of Togo (2009-14)**
- **Reached top 16** at the 2019 Africa Cup
- **Helped Togo** to a bronze medal at the 2019 Africa Team Championship
- **Seven-time U2500 winner** at Westchester; **six-time runner-up**
- **Also skilled** at baseball and soccer
- **Speaks** French, English, and Ewe
- **Says he's** “slow to trust people, but fun once you get to know me”
- **Fun fact:** The last time he had a haircut was in July 2018
- **Goal:** to own his own multisport gym ... and coach champions