

WESTCHESTER OPEN — AN OVERVIEW

October 2011 to August 2016

by Bill McGimpsey

The first Westchester Table Tennis Open was held in October 2011. Since January 2012 the event has been held monthly, with one exception, for a total of 56 tournaments. Altogether there have been 20 different winners.

A listing of these 20 winners to date is presented below. A second list shows the highest-rated winners (those above 2700).

Since January 2014 the tournament has had 4-star USATT sanctioning, the only monthly tournament with this distinction. First prize has always been at least \$1,500, with total cash prizes over \$5,000. Typically the tournament attracts three or four players rated 2600+, and 10-12 rated 2500+, so the level of play is always top-shelf.

Kai Zhang of the Westchester TTC has won the open event a total of 17 times to date, starting when he was 15 — an incredible accomplishment. No other player comes close.

The lowest-ranked player ever to reach the open final was an admittedly underrated Ojin Kwon of South Korea (2325), who lost to Wei Wang of China (2810) in November 2015. The second-greatest disparity in rating was in December 2012, when Mishel Levinski (2376) of Brooklyn lost in the final to Damien Provost (2652) of France 3-1.

One unusual aspect of the tournament is the number of top players from Europe, Africa, Asia, and Central America who have competed. Besides the winners listed below, these have included Taiwan's Chia-shen Lee, ITTF-ranked #194 at the time he came; Poland's Filip Szymanski, ranked #242; Nigeria's Olajide Omotayo, #635; Togo's Kokou Dodji Fanny, #760; and Benin's Olouwachehoun Guiganfode, #801. Kokou has now become a pro at the club. Other foreign competitors have included Ange-Cédric Oba, the table tennis champion of Côte d'Ivoire; Yadira Silva, the #1 female player in Mexico; Neha Aggarwal, a 2012 table tennis Olympian from India; and the entire national table tennis team of Costa Rica.

All 56 tournaments have been overseen by the same people — club owner Will Shortz, manager Robert Roberts, and pro Rawle Alleyne. International umpire Roman Tinyszyn has served as referee almost every month.

Typically only 15% of the players preregister for the tournament, as there has never been a late fee. The rest sign up at the door. Attendance has ranged from 55 (on a snowy Dec. 2013 weekend) to 164 (Sept. 2015). Average attendance over the years is shown below.

A review of the list of winners shows that, with the exception of Adam Hugh and two Europeans, the winners have all been Chinese-born and trained. However, home-grown players have been benefitting from exposure to this great talent pool, and on occasion they are starting to break through from the early round robin stages of the open into the playoffs. These prodigies include the three Alguetti brothers (Adar, Gal, and Sharon), Josh Schuback, Rahul Acharya, and Matthew Needle. Perhaps one day one or more of them will make it into the table below.

Open Winner	Rating*	From*	Wins
Kai Zhang	2572-2713	New York	17
Qing Feng Guang	2689-2776	China	4
Damien Provost	2651-2695	France	4
Eugene Wang	2783-2816	Canada	4
Zirui Zhao	2580-2776	New Jersey	4
Ruichao Chen	2606-2689	Maryland	3
Kewei Li	2418-2686	Georgia	3
YanJun Gao	2618	New York	2
Jian Li	2630-2661	New Jersey	2
Jishan Liang	2615-2635	Washington	2
Wei Wang	2790-2810	China	2
Bob Chen	2735	China	1
Adam Hugh	2559	New Jersey	1
Bochao Li	2617	China	1
Jianho Sun	2545	New Jersey	1
Ting Sun	2708	Maryland	1
Bojan Tokic	2800 (est.)	Slovenia	1
Can Kevin Wang	2476	New York	1
Kaden Xu	2699	New Jersey	1
Bohan Zhang	2714	China	1

Highest-Rated Winners	Rating*	Date	From*
Eugene Wang	2816	Apr. 2015	Canada
Eugene Wang	2810	Jun. 2013	Canada
Wei Wang	2810	Nov. 2015	China
Eugene Wang	2806	Apr. 2013	Canada
Bojan Tokic	2800 (est.)	Jun. 2014	Slovenia
Wei Wang	2790	Nov. 2014	China
Eugene Wang	2783	Oct. 2012	Canada
Qing Feng Guang	2776	Aug. 2014	China
Zirui Zhao	2776	Sep. 2014	New Jersey
Qing Feng Guang	2770	Jul. 2014	China
Bob Chen	2735	Apr. 2014	China
Qing Feng Guang	2727	Oct. 2014	China
Bohan Zhang	2714	Apr. 2016	China
Kai Zhang	2713	Oct. 2015	New York
Ting Sun	2708	Oct. 2011	Maryland

* at time of winning

Average Number of Players Per Tournament

2012	115
2013	114
2014	130
2015	136
2016 (to date)	132