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# Rajul Sheth named Developmental Coach of the Year

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Milpitas, Calif.

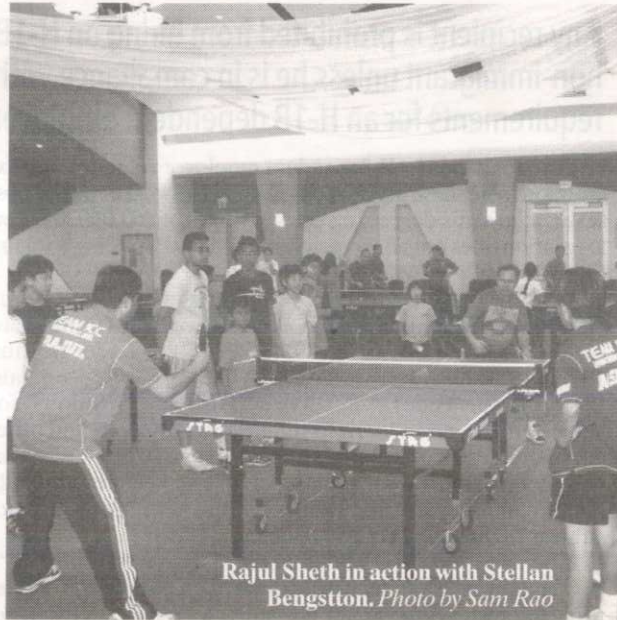
USA TABLE Tennis (USATT), the official body of table tennis in the USA, has given a rare recognition to Indian-American TT Coach Rajul Sheth of Fremont, California. Sheth was chosen the 2008 US Developmental Coach of the Year for his yeoman service in promoting the game and also showing phenomenal growth and success for his team club at the India Community Center in Milpitas, northern California. Sheth is the sports and recreation director and TT Coach for Team ICC and a former Gujarat state champion with many international matches under his belt.

The national Table Tennis award is a rare and distinct honor and The USATT 2008 Coaches of the Year include National Coach of the Year — Teodor (Doru) Gheorghe Colorado Springs, CO, Development Coach of the Year — Rajul Sheth Milpitas, CA, and Volunteer Coach of the Year — LA Johnston Pensacola, FL.

“These individuals’ names have been submitted to the US Olympic Committee as a part of their larger selection process for a Coach of the Year (COY) recognition program that includes all Olympic Program sports. There were a significantly larger number of nominations received this year over last year and each of the nominees received a thorough review by the Selection Committee. The USATT Coach of the Year Selection Committee consisted of John Allen, Coaching Committee Chairman, Ashu Jain, USATT USOC Athlete Advisory Council Representative, Whitney Ping, USATT USOC Athlete Advisory Council Alternate Representative, Peter Scudner, Chairman of the USATT Board, and Michael D. Cavanaugh, USATT CEO,” USATT said in a statement.

Coach Sheth said, “The award was a great thing for me. Only one TT coach in the whole country is honored this way and I feel very proud and humbled. The award recognizes two things: that we have built the largest club in North America, offering the best TT experience in an accredited setting, and also that we have pioneered training techniques that are unique to unlocking the talent of serious players of all ages.”

Interestingly, in the short tenure of Rajul Sheth as the Sports and Recreation director at ICC, the club has become the largest Table Tennis Center in North America. “As the largest TT facility in North America, on any given day we have



Rajul Sheth in action with Stellan Bengstton. Photo by Sam Rao

over 100 players at the facility and our membership is about 180 currently,” adds Rajul. The SF Bay area, which had only two TT clubs in 2004, is now home to 12 TT clubs.

Indian-Americans have picked up the sport and Team ICC has achieved repeated success at the US Junior Olympics, garnering over 20 medals in various age groups and categories since its foray a couple of years ago. Several promising youngsters like Ariel Hsieh, a US Junior National team player, will also be trying out for Team USA in the 2012 Summer Olympics games, proudly representing the ICC TT Center.

The majority of regular players at the ICC TT facility are of non-Indian origin but the developmental league for Under-10 and Under-12 players have wide representation of players like Erika Tan and Krish Avvari, who are already making waves in their age groups across the USA and are certain to make a mark ahead of the 2016 Olympics.

Sheth is still very highly rated (among the top 60-70 players in the country) but does not participate in any competitions, preferring administration and coaching responsibilities in-

stead. He also runs regular Special Camps with world renowned coaches like three-times world Champion Stellan Bengsttan and Gao Lin Tang, former head coach of China’s Szechuan province. There are also special training camps for promising Juniors and coaches are also available for private coaching. State-of-the-art equipment like TT Robots, racquets, shoes, balls and T-shirts, as well as advanced coaching techniques, are used which is unheard of in most gyms.