

**Latin American Experience Continues in Positive Vein in Leipzig**

By: Ian Marshall, ITTF Publications Editor

11/17/2009

Organised by University of Leipzig with the support of the German Table Tennis Association in co-operation with the ITTF Development Programme, a total of 12 coaches from Latin America have been attending this University since August 2009.

The aim is to gain an B Level Licence under the German Certification Scheme and an also it is included an ITTF Level Two Certificate when the course ends in January 2010. Matters are under the direction of Marco Fehl, an ITTF Level Two Course Conductor and responsible for coach education within the German Table Tennis Association.

Kai Wienholz is also present to advise in the role of assistant teacher.

**Classes**

"The participants receive classes every morning from 7.30 until 1.00pm not only on specific table tennis matters but also on sport science", explained Leandro Olvech, the ITTF Co-ordinator of Development Programmes. "Also in the afternoon various activities are organized."

An intense programme but most certainly it is one that the course members are thoroughly enjoying and gaining benefit.

**Exceeded Expectations**

"The course has totally exceeded our expectations; we are getting an experience totally different from where we live, as we are receiving technical, tactical, physical and psychological education", said Marcio Beloqui from Uruguay. "Everything is in great detail; we are all enjoying living in the University campus and sharing experiences with people from other countries; the German people have made this experience unbelievable.

Undoubtedly strong links with Germany have been forged.

**Invitation**

"Christian Klas, who is the President of the LTTV Leutzscher Fuchse 1990 e.V, one of the biggest clubs in Saxony, invited all members of the group to play in his club while they are studying in Leipzig", said Leandro Olvech. "So it also works as an integration experience for everyone with the Germans." A good experience but Tito Avendaño from Bolivia can go one better.

**Memorable Visits**

"One day six of us travelled to Fulda, which is 300kilometres from Leipzig, to watch the local team with Jan-Ove Waldner playing against Borussia Düsseldorf which comprised both Timo Boll and Christian Süß", he enthused. "We were quite excited about that match but after walking a long time from the railway station to get to the stadium in the rain, we became quite demoralized as we couldn't find the venue."

However, help was soon at hand.

"Very sad we walked back to the Fulda railway station when suddenly a guy driving a Mercedes asked if we were going to the match, and invited us to join him, seven people in the car!" continued Tito Avendaño. "We were late but watched the best match ever in our lives, the best of all was afterwards, we asked Waldner for some pictures and he kept talking to for a long time; we were amazed."

The group was delighted and a video of the visit can be found on youtube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=eROc8-PTTl0&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eROc8-PTTl0&feature=channel)

"We were also invited to the European Championships in Stuttgart, that was another amazing experience, watching table tennis at so high level that we could only dream or watch on television", added Tito Avendaño.

**PTT Course**

Meanwhile, back at the University of Leipzig, on Thursday 12th and Friday 13th November, Leandro Olvech was present on the University to lead the PTT component of the course.

"I was delighted to visit the participants again and give them this course at the University where I studied", said Leandro Olvech. "It was a pleasure for me to meet the 12 Latin American table tennis fans in the city where I am based." A delight for Leandro Olvech and it was also a delight for the course members.

**New Experience**

Ecuador's Paul Calle tries playing table tennis in a wheelchair

Photo By: Courtesy of Leandro Olvech

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"The PTT course was a newly experience for me, playing in wheelchairs was something totally new and also watching the videos inspired me and made me think about how many times we complaint about insignificant things", said Marcio Beloqui from Uruguay. "It made me think that we shouldn't pay so much attention about what we cannot do but about what we can do."

#### Positive

Equally Jorge Palma from Chile was positive.

"I found it quite interesting in the PTT class", he said. "I have some experience with people with a disability but it is not easy to find the ways to improve them as a coach."

The views of the course participants were echoed by the Course Conductor.

"I am very happy to receive Leandro Olvech as guest teacher on the University and to see the very good relationships between the University of Leipzig and the ITTF; thanks to this cooperation, the participants will receive both certificates, from the DTTB and ITTF", said Marco Fehl. "To get the ITTF Level Two Certificate, the participants still have to do practical work when they go back home; my thanks to the ITTF for the manuals donated to the participants."

#### Most Satisfied

A very satisfied Marco Fehl and also there was a very satisfied Leandro Olvech.

"I find the course very complete for any table tennis coach; however, for the University it is difficult to follow up what the coaches are doing afterwards and to see the impact of the course", he said. "Through this co-operation with the ITTF, the participants must to do 50 hours practical at home to get their ITTF Level Two certificate and they will be supervised using the ITTF network, they will be linked to their national table tennis associations; we all want coaches to be active."

Active coaches most certainly, that is the key to growth in sport and in particular in table tennis.



Course members with Leandro Olvech.

Photo courtesy of Leandro Olvech



A meeting to remember with Jan-Ove Waldner.

Photo courtesy of Fredy Aguilar

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