



Texas Wesleyan University Table Tennis

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RAMS REACH QUARTERFINALS AT 2005 NORTH AMERICAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

BALTIMORE —Competing alongside an amazing 190 teams from around the world, the Texas Wesleyan University table tennis team advanced to the Elite Division quarterfinals of the North American Team Championships, Sun., Nov. 27, at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, MD.

With that finish, the Rams easily captured the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA) Collegiate Award for best finish among colleges and university table tennis programs. This is the third time the school has qualified for the quarterfinals in this tournament, which is annually the largest team event in the United States. In both 2001 and 2004 Texas Wesleyan advanced to the semifinals, placing third overall.

In the quarterfinals Texas Wesleyan's senior Eric Owens, freshman Ludovic Gombos, freshman Carlos Chiu and sophomore Dinko Kranjac fell 5-1 to a team comprised of three of the top 15 players in the United States: No. 10 Han Xiao, No. 12 Adam Hugh, and No. 13 Yuxiang Lu. Coming into the tournament, Owens was ranked eleventh, followed by Gombos ranked fifteenth.

The match could have easily slanted towards the Rams as four of six matches went to the fifth and deciding game. Owens fell to Adam Hugh 2-3 (7-11, 11-7, 7-11,

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11-6, 9-11) after leading 9-7 in the final game. Carlos Chiu suffered a dramatic defeat to the much higher rated Li 2-3 (11-7, 7-11, 11-7, 9-11, 9-11), losing on match point on an awkward block that defiantly dribbled over the net.

“The 5-1 defeat does not reveal how close the contest truly was, because it could have easily been us winning 5-1,” Keith Evans, assistant table tennis coach, said.

The team that defeated Wesleyan then fell in the semifinals to the Canada National Team, who won the overall title. Leading up to the quarterfinals, Texas Wesleyan sported a 5-1 team record, including a 5-1 victory over the Puerto Rico National Team. Overall, Rams student athletes finished with 26 wins and 15 losses.

“I was very impressed with our team’s ability to fight,” Evans said. “Carlos was a great example of this, as he won 11-8 in the fifth game over Puerto Rico’s Abner Colon, a very experienced attacking chopper.”

Several Rams will individually compete in the 2005 U.S. Nationals Table Tennis Championships, Dec. 14-17, at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. After a long-awaited holiday break, Texas Wesleyan resumes table tennis training Fri. Jan. 13. Next semester the team will play in several tournaments around the country, but their main focus is preparing for the 2006 Clear Channel NCTTA National Collegiate Table Tennis Championships, Apr. 8-10, at Texas Wesleyan University’s Sid Richardson Gymnasium. The Rams will attempt to win their third straight collegiate team title.