

EXTRACT FROM BARCLAYS BANK
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Another strong contender for the Sportsman of the Year title would be George W. Lamb, just completing his first overseas tour at Belize, British Honduras. The photographs which we reproduce on page 654 were sent us by Mr. Peter J. Carr who has written a detailed description of George Lamb's becoming a national table tennis champion:

The British Honduras National Table Tennis Tournament was played over three days—16th, 17th and 18th April, 1963, at the Riverside Hall, Belize, in very humid conditions, and George's weight at the end of his considerable effort—he lost nearly a stone—reflected best of all the results of a really energetic week of practice and competition.

From the outset George settled down to his natural defensive game which was fortunate from the spectator point of view, as the majority of the other competitors based their game on all-out attack. This produced many thrilling rallies to which the large audiences responded enthusiastically. In his fifth round match, however, George encountered an opponent who was equally adept in defence, and this resulted in a rather slow, lengthy game which was in direct contrast to the final, which was played at the end of the third evening.

George's meeting with Orlando Rhamdas in the final provided a fitting climax to the tournament, the prize for which, apart from the usual silverware, was the opportunity of playing against Richard Bergmann and Chou Lin Chen the following evening.

In the final, each player matched the other point for point in the first game, which the Barclays man eventually won, 21—18. In the second game things began to look rather worrying when Rhamdas built up a long lead and took the service at 12—3. At this stage, the Radio Belize commentator said that he thought George's stamina was rapidly departing, and in fact, almost everyone was of the same opinion when Rhamdas took the game, 21—6. During the interval before the final game George was to be observed towelling himself and consuming liquid from a "dimpled" bottle which, however, he afterwards assured me, contained a well-known glucose drink!

All appeared lost when service changed to Rhamdas at 17—13 in his favour in the final game, but by calm, purposeful play George pulled back the lead and served 17—18 down. The atmosphere was electric as the score proceeded 17—19, 18—19, 19 all, and then 20—19 to Rhamdas, and he was within one point of winning. George then retrieved an "impossible" shot yards away from the table, and Rhamdas, failing to lift the backspin from the ball, hit into the net. Twenty all! Rhamdas was visibly strained now, and, in attempting a forehand drive, missed the ball altogether! The next point had the crowd on their feet. After a long "over the table" rally, George took his life in his hands and produced a winning back-hand flick to become the British Honduras National Champion of 1963.

As George remarked immediately afterwards in a Radio interview, "it was quite a game". He indicated that after having lost the second game by such a wide margin he had not given himself much of a chance. "My main worry," he commented, "was that I thought I was going to run out of 'steam' before the end—in fact, I almost did."

The following evening, a packed hall witnessed a memorable exhibition of table tennis at its best. George featured in thoroughly enjoyable games against the world champions, doing rather better against Bergmann than against Lin Chen, whose all-out hitting will long be remembered by those present.

The evening ended by Bergmann presenting the National Tournament prize, a beautiful silver cup, to George, who in turn presented a gift on behalf of the British Honduras Table Tennis Association to commemorate the visit of Bergmann and Lin Chen to British Honduras.