

2018 Butterfly Canadian Senior Championships
July 6, 2018
Day 1



The Veterans of Table Tennis

It's common knowledge that professional athletes retire when they reach a certain age. With increasing age comes the inevitability of decreasing physical strength and dexterity.

Table tennis is different. It's an all-ages inclusive sport where wit and sharp reflexes take precedence over brute force. Tony Kiesenhofer, CEO of Table Tennis Canada, calls the sport "brain active"—it's been proven to be good for fighting off dementia and improving cardiovascular health. One thing is for certain: table tennis doesn't belong solely to the youth.

The veterans of table tennis are proof this. One example is Margarita Shamraeva (BC) who, at 43 years of age, has now been playing table tennis now for over thirty years. The bronze medalist for the women's singles veteran 40-70 event, which concluded today, Shamraeva displayed impressive prowess on the court.

When asked why she continues to play table tennis, Shamraeva responds, "Just because I love it. It's the best emotion I've got in my life. It brings so much joy."

She also touches on the health benefits that come along with playing the sport. "It [also] helps [with] staying fit and sharp, keeping quick reactions."

A software tester by day, Shamraeva says she enjoys being part of the BC table tennis community. "I've been practicing a lot at the local clubs and I've participated in a couple of local leagues.

When asked whether she will continue playing table tennis for the rest of her life, Shamraeva is optimistic. "I hope so. [I hope] to play maybe the US Open [in the future]."

The veterans movement is exponentially becoming known on the world table tennis stage. ITTF will be launching a World Veterans Tour soon; the US Open tournament, commonly held in Las Vegas, has always included veterans events.

Older generations are invaluable assets to their respective table tennis communities because of their wealth of experience and knowledge of the game. But far more than that is a prevalent passion for the sport, which undoubtedly influences the younger generations.