



Table Tennis

BRITISH TABLE TENNIS FEDERATION CASE STUDY

– Chris Loxston, EIS Yorkshire Performance Analyst

In September 2007 the British Table Tennis Association moved the English Institute of Sport to Sheffield and enlisted the services of the English Institute of Sport to help support the programme through to the London 2012 Olympic Games. Chris Loxston is one of the performance analysts, from the support services, who has been working closely with the programme.

“Dartfish has been a critical part of the development of the performance analysis support and with all the possibilities the programme offers, we have managed to implement various types of analysis support into both the training and competition environment”.

Table Tennis is a very technical sport and being able to develop a sound and robust technique is essential to producing a successful performance. With Dartfish being such

a versatile programme we have been able to use the various tools and functions to aid in the reviewing of performance and technique with the coaches and athletes.

HOW DARTFISH IS USED

Dartfish has enabled the GB Table Tennis programme to build a performance analysis support system into its day to day workings as a programme. The programme is very versatile and has allowed many aspects of both training and competition to be reviewed in a greater depth than ever experienced before. Below I will provide a few examples of where the programme has really made a difference.

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Tagging | It is without doubt the most influential part of the growth of analysis support within the programme. With a table tennis match potentially lasting over an hour and now best of 7 sets, it can be very difficult to recall specific periods within a match. However, the tagging module allows the game to be broken down into clips of each point with the information of what happened in that point being added to the clip. Being able to recall specific points throughout a match has been priceless, especially in the tournament environment where the time between matches can be minimal. We have therefore been able to get the critical information across to the athletes and coaches before starting their next match.

The tagging module allows the metadata to be exported for use in other programmes, such as Microsoft Excel. Being able to export the data means that automatic match report sheets can be produced instantly, which again has been priceless where time is an issue.

InTheAction | InTheAction is a positive tool in the training environment. The ability to use a dual camera set up both in live or delayed video feedback has been excellent. A good example of this is providing feedback on the service, which is without doubt one of the most important parts of the game. In this setting we are able to have a camera front on the athlete with the second camera table height on the server's side looking at the distance of the ball bounce from the net. This has implications on the length of the service on the other side of the table. Whilst in this mode Dartfish also provides the ability to draw target areas on the screen, giving the athlete a visual target to aim at. By setting the cameras on a 4-5 second delay players have enough time to serve, recover and then look at the screen to assess the service.

Use of Dartfish | Overall as Dartfish is such a versatile programme we have been able to implement it into many various aspects of the sport. The uses are really endless and once you have a full understanding of the programme and its abilities it is all about being creative with the options that Dartfish provides and from this, world class analysis is definitely possible.

PRACTICAL TECHNICAL TIPS

Within the world of table tennis the hardware required is very basic with the competition usually being a hard drive camera and the all important laptop. However, in the last few months we have tested using Dartfish on a tablet touch screen laptop. It has enabled real-time tagging of matches to take place where desk and power are not available.

Within the training environment the main hardware uses are two DV cameras linked up to the laptop via very long firewire cables, so again not a complicated set-up.

DARTFISH SOFTWARE RECOMMENDATION

With Dartfish being so versatile the possibilities are endless and I believe could be used in any environment, for example an education setting or even a business environment. The software is very easy to use with a minimal amount of time required to learn your way around all the modules. Once you understand the capabilities of the programme the possibilities are only limited by your creativity. For me, Dartfish is the only software that gives me the capabilities that I need to provide the best analysis to the GB Team.

*Chris Loxston
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