

TABLE TENNIS STUDY GUIDE

(revised 11/09)

I. History

- Table tennis, originally known as ping-pong, was developed in England in the early 1900s.
- The sport is growing in popularity in the United States, but for decades the players from Asian and European countries have been most dominant.
- More than 100 countries belong to the International Table Tennis Federation, which holds a world championship every two years.

II. The Game

- The object of the game is to score points by hitting the ball across the net and onto the opponent's side of the table without the opponent being able to return the ball.
- Table tennis may be played in singles or doubles.
- The first side to score 21 points wins – unless the score is tied at 20. Then the side that gets ahead by 2 points wins.
- A match is the best two-of-three games or the best three-of-five.
- Doubles matches are always the best two-of three.

III. The Rules

- In singles, the server serves, the receiver returns, and the two continue to alternate hits until a point is scored.
- In doubles, the server serves, the receiver returns, the partner of the server returns, and the partner of the receiver returns. That sequence continues until a point is scored.
- In singles, after every five points the server becomes the receiver, and the receiver becomes the server.
- In doubles, each player gets five serves at a time, alternating between teams.
- Players or teams change ends at the end of every game.
- A ball is in play until it touches something other than the table, net or racket.

IV. Scoring

A player scores a point when the opponent

- fails to make a good serve
- fails to make a good return
- allows the ball to bounce twice in his/her court
- strikes the ball twice in making a return
- moves the table while the ball is in play
- touches the playing surface or the net while the ball is in play
- strikes the ball out of sequence in doubles play

V. Serving

- The server holds the ball on the open, flat palm of his/her free hand.
- The ball must be stationary, above the table, and behind the serving end line.
- The server tosses the ball up at least 6 inches, without spinning it.
- The server strikes the ball on the descent with the racket behind the serving end line.
- The ball must touch the server's court first, pass over the net and touch the receiver's court.
- In doubles, the served ball must hit on the server's right-hand court and then the receiver's right-hand court. The serve must alternate from right court to left court on each serve.
- If a player misses the ball while attempting to serve, he loses a point.

VI. Returns

- A return is good when it passes over the net and strikes the opponent's court.
- A return may touch the net, so long as it lands in the opponent's court.
- The ball may not bounce twice on the same side, or be hit twice on the same side, before its return.
- Striking the ball before it hits the table is not allowed and that person loses the point (**NO VOLLEYING**).

VII. Terms

- An **ACE** is a serve which the receiver cannot return
- The **LET**:
 - A serve touches the net and lands in the receiver's court.
 - A serve is made before the receiving team is ready
 - The ball is broken during the rally
- A **RALLY** describes the time during which the ball is in play.
- The **RECEIVER** is the player who will strike the ball second in a rally.
- The **SERVER** is the player who will strike the ball to begin the rally.
- A **VOLLEY** is an illegal stroke of the ball while it is in the air and before it has touched the table.

VIII. The Equipment

The table:

- 9 feet long and 5 feet wide, 30 inches above the floor.
- Normally the surface is dark green, with a white line along the edge, forming two side lines and end lines.
- For doubles, a center line divides each court in half.

The ball:

- It is made of celluloid or similar plastic and can be white, yellow or orange.
- It is spherical and weighs .1 ounce.

The racket:

- Can be any size, shape and weight
- It is made of wood
- The sides of the paddle must be uniform and a dark color. Both sides do not have to be the same color.

IX. Skills

- Table tennis requires much concentration and excellent reactions.
- The game calls for a high degree of hand-eye coordination, agility and quickness.
- The most common grip used by a majority of players is the "shake hands" grip.
- The basic strokes are the forehand and backhand push shot. Variations in arm and wrist movements will allow spin (topspin and backspin) to be imparted to the ball.
- The serve should be tossed 6 to 8 inches high. The ball is contacted behind the table and must Hit the server's side of table first.