

# TABLE TENNIS



## 1. Objective of Table Tennis

The main objective of table tennis is to **score points** by **hitting the ball** over the net onto the opponent's side of the table in such a way that the opponent **cannot return** it successfully. A match is won by the player or team who first scores the agreed-upon number of points, usually 11 or 21.

## 2. Basic Rules of Table Tennis

- **Players:** Table tennis can be played either as a **single** (one player vs. one player) or **doubles** (two players on each side) game.
- **Scoring:** Points are scored when the opponent fails to return the ball properly (e.g., missing the ball, hitting the ball outside the table, or failing to clear the net). The game is usually played to **11 points** (with a 2-point lead needed to win) in singles or doubles matches. In competitive play, matches may consist of multiple games.
- **Winning a Match:** A match is usually played as the best of 3, 5, or 7 games.

## 3. The Table Tennis Table

- **Dimensions:** The table is 9 feet (2.74 meters) long, 5 feet (1.52 meters) wide, and 30 inches (76 cm) high.
- **Surface:** The surface is typically made of **wood** or composite material with a smooth, matte finish, and the color is usually a **dark shade** (often green or blue).
- **Net:** The net is 6 inches (15.25 cm) high and stretches across the width of the table. It divides the table into two halves, one for each player or team.

## 4. Equipment

- **Ping Pong Ball:**
  - **Material:** The ball is usually made of **celluloid** or a similar plastic material.
  - **Size:** The diameter of the ball is 40mm (1.57 inches).
  - **Weight:** The ball weighs around 2.7 grams.
  - **Color:** The ball can be **white** or **orange**.
- **Racket (Paddle):**
  - **Material:** The racket is typically made of **wood** with a rubber covering on both sides. The rubber can vary in texture and thickness depending on the player's style.

- **Grip:** There are different types of grips (e.g., **shakehand** or **penhold**, depending on the region or player's preference).

## 5. Basic Rules of Serving

- **Service:** The ball must be placed on the **server's side** of the table and then served by tossing it upward at least 6 inches (15 cm) before hitting it over the net. The ball must first bounce on the server's side, then cross over the net and bounce on the opponent's side.
- **Change of Serve:** In singles, players serve two consecutive points, after which the serve alternates between the two players. In doubles, the serve alternates every two points, and players must serve diagonally (from the right half of their side to the opponent's right half).
- **Service Faults:** The server must not:
  - Hide the ball during the serve.
  - Fail to toss the ball at least 6 inches into the air.
  - Serve the ball illegally, for example, hitting it without it bouncing on the server's side or not clearing the net.

## 6. Types of Strokes in Table Tennis

- **Forehand:** A basic stroke made by hitting the ball with the front side of the racket (usually with the dominant hand).
- **Backhand:** A stroke made by hitting the ball with the back side of the racket (using the non-dominant side).
- **Topspin:** A stroke that makes the ball rotate forward, causing it to dip quickly after crossing the net.
- **Backspin:** A stroke that makes the ball rotate backward, causing it to stay in the air longer and drop faster.
- **Sidespin:** A stroke that adds spin to the ball, causing it to curve sideways.
- **Smash:** A powerful shot made by hitting the ball with force, usually after a high bounce.
- **Block:** A defensive shot made by simply positioning the racket to intercept the ball and return it with minimal movement.

- **Chop:** A defensive stroke, typically used when receiving serves or returning fast shots, that adds a heavy backspin to the ball.

## 7. Scoring System

- **Traditional Scoring:** The game is played to 11 points, and a player must win by a margin of at least 2 points.
- **Deuce:** If the score reaches 10-10, players must win by 2 points (e.g., 12-10 or 11-9).
- **Change of Ends:** Players switch sides of the table after every game. In the final game of a match (if there is one), players switch sides when the first player reaches 5 points.

## 8. Doubles Rules

In doubles, each team consists of two players. Here are some additional rules:

- **Serving:** The serve must alternate between the players on each team. The service is delivered diagonally, from the right half of the server's side to the right half of the receiver's side.
- **Order of Play:** Players on a team must alternate hitting the ball. For example, player 1 on Team A serves, player 2 on Team B returns, then player 2 on Team A hits the next ball, etc.

## 9. Table Tennis Techniques

- **Spin:** Spin is a major element in table tennis. It refers to the rotation of the ball and affects its trajectory, bounce, and speed.
  - **Topspin:** Causes the ball to dip and bounce higher after it crosses the net.
  - **Backspin:** Causes the ball to float and sink slower.
  - **Sidespin:** Causes the ball to curve sideways.
- **Speed and Power:** Players aim for speed in their shots, but power is also a factor, especially when smashing or driving the ball. Speed allows for a fast game, but players also use controlled shots to place the ball accurately.
- **Footwork:** Proper footwork is key to getting in position to make an accurate stroke. Quick lateral and forward movements are important for returning shots effectively.

## 10. Umpires and Officials

- **Umpire:** In professional or competitive play, a **central umpire** oversees the match and makes decisions about rules violations, such as faults in service or points.

- **Assistant Umpires:** In doubles matches or larger events, assistant umpires may also be present to help with decisions, especially related to the serve or edge of the table.

## 11. Common Faults and Violations

- **Let:** A "let" is called if the serve touches the net but still lands on the correct side of the table. The point is replayed without penalty.
- **Double Bounce:** If the ball bounces more than once on the same side of the table without being returned, the opponent scores a point.
- **Out of Bounds:** If the ball lands outside the playing surface or on the table's edge, it is a fault and results in a point for the opponent.

## 12. Table Tennis Terminology

- **Love:** A score of zero.
- **Deuce:** A tie at 10-10 (or 20-20), requiring a 2-point lead to win.
- **Side Spin:** A spin causing the ball to curve sideways.
- **Top Spin:** A forward spin causing the ball to dip and bounce high.
- **Chop:** A defensive stroke with heavy backspin.
- **Smash:** A powerful stroke typically used to finish off a point.

## 13. History of Table Tennis

- **Origin:** Table tennis originated in **England** in the late 19th century. It was initially played as an after-dinner pastime using improvised equipment, such as books for paddles and corks for balls.
- **International Growth:** The game became more formalized, and the **International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)** was founded in 1926.
- **Olympic Sport:** Table tennis became an official Olympic sport at the **1988 Seoul Olympics** for men and women.

## 14. Competitive Table Tennis

- **Major Competitions:** The **World Table Tennis Championships** is the most prestigious individual competition. Other major tournaments include the **ITTF World Tour**, **World Cup**, and regional competitions like the **Asian Table Tennis Championships**.

- **Olympic Games:** Table tennis has been part of the **Olympic Games** since 1988, with events for men and women in singles and doubles.

#### **15. Popular Table Tennis Players**

- **Jan-Ove Waldner:** Often referred to as the “Mozart of table tennis,” Waldner from Sweden is one of the most successful and influential players in the sport’s history.
- **Ma Long:** A Chinese player who has been a dominant force in the sport, winning multiple World Championships and Olympic gold medals.
- **Deng Yaping:** Another Chinese player, Deng Yaping is considered one of the greatest female players in table tennis history.