

Table Tennis Study Guide

History:

Table tennis was first played in Salem, Massachusetts during the 1890's on a miniature tennis court on the floor. Eventually, the game moved to the dining room table. England changed the ball from web covered to celluloid and called the game Ping-Pong (a name derived from the sound of the ball striking the paddle and the table). The Parker Brother's manufacturers of indoor play equipment in the United States sold the game equipment under this trade name to fans in this country and England patented the name of "Ping Pong".

Scoring:

The first player/team to score 21 points wins provided he/she is winning by at least two points. If the score is tied at 20, called a deuce, each player/team alternates serving one point. The first player/team to score two points in a row wins.

Point:

A player/team will not earn a point if:

1. They fail to make a good serve
2. They fail to make a good return
3. A player's racquet or anything they are wearing moves the playing surface while the ball is in play.
4. The ball contacts the players or anything they are wearing before it passes over the net or contacts the table
5. Their free hand touches the playing surface while the ball is in play
6. They volley the ball

Choice of Serve and End of Table:

Choice of serve is determined by chances (toss of coin or rally). Winner chooses which end of the table they want or whether they want to receive the serve. The player who starts at the end of the table in one game shall start the next game at the other end.

Serve

The hand must toss up the ball. In doing this, the serving hand must be flat with the fingers straight and together, thumb free, and the ball resting on the palm of the hand. The player cannot pinch or cup the ball or put spin on it in any way. If there is a doubt, a *let* shall be called and the point shall be replayed. If this happens again, a point shall be awarded to the receiver.

On the serve, the ball must touch the server's side of the table first, pass over the or around the net and then touch the receiver's side. Receivers may not play the ball in the air. This is called a *volley*, which is illegal.

At the moment of impact on the serve, the racket and ball must be behind the server's end line and extension of the sideline. The hand, ball, and racket may never be in simultaneous contact. In other words, the ball must be free of the hand before contact.

Players will alternate serving after every 5 points unless the game becomes 20-all.

Doubles Serve:

Doubles play makes use of the line running down the middle of the table. This line runs parallel to the sidelines. When serving, the ball must touch the server's right-half court, pass over or around the net, and then touch the receiver's right-half court. All serving in doubles comes from the right-half side of the court, never the left-half side.

Order of Serve – Doubles:

The service alternates after every five points as in singles. After every five points, the receiver becomes the server and the partner of the server becomes the new receiver. Before, the new server serves the ball; the team that just served must switch positions before the other team serves. If the score is tied at 20, the service order shall remain the same, except it shall change after each point.

Order of Play / Receiving – Doubles:

The same partner cannot keep returning the ball. Receiving alternates after each hit as follows:

- Server to receiver
- Receiver to partner of server
- Partner of server to partner of receiver
- Partner of receiver to server

If a player shall receive out of turn, and is discovered by the other team, a point is scored. If the mistake is not discovered until after a series of five points, it shall be ignored.

Let:

The ball is declared out of play and no other player/team is awarded a point.

A let is declared when:

1. The serve touches the net or supports and is otherwise good.
2. The receiver is not ready. (The receiver is considered ready if he or she strikes at the ball)
3. The ball splits or is imperfect
4. An accident occurs which is not under the player's control

Playing Strategy:

Strategic movements in table tennis are similar to those in tennis. A common strategy is to change the pace of the game from shifting from the long to the short game. One must learn to impart spin on the ball in order to take advantage of an opponent's position. A player's best assets are accuracy and control.

Terminology and Skills:

- **ACE** A serve which completely eludes the receiver
- **ADVANTAGE** The next point made after a deuce score
- **BACKHAND** Stroke frequently used by right-handed player when returning a ball hit to their left, in which the paddle is held so that the back of the hand faces the ball
- **BACKSPIN** Ball hit so that the top of the ball rotates forward the person who hit the ball with the bottom of the ball moving away
- **CHOP** A stroke in which the lower part of the ball is hit with a downward stroke of the paddle, imparting backspin to the ball. Ball is hit at the top of the bounce.
- **DROP SHOT** A shot played so softly that it dies before an opponent can reach it, or places them at a disadvantage if they can play it. Best used when you have driven your opponent back from the table
- **DRIVE** Forward and upward stroking motion resulting in fast return with topspin.
- **FOREHAND** A stroke or volley in such a fashion that the palm is the leading part of the movement.
- **GRIP** Most players use the tennis grip, called the "handshake" grip. Grasp the handle of the paddle up near the flat blade with the forefinger and thumb actually on the two playing surfaces of the paddle.
- **PUSH SHOT** Easiest and most simple method of returning the ball. The ball is struck with a pushing motion of the paddle immediately after the ball begins to rise from its bounce so that no spin is placed on the ball. This is a defensive stroke.
- **SERVE** Method of putting the ball in play. A good serve is delivered from as low as possible, barely above table height.
- **SMASH** Fast, hard return of a high bouncing ball.
- **TOPSPIN** Ball is stroked so that the top spins forward in the direction of the flight. It is the opposite of backspin.
- **VOLLEY** Illegal stroking of the ball while it is in the air and before it has touched the table.