



**RECREATIONAL SERVICES**

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# Intramural Rulebook



# Table Tennis

## **TABLE TENNIS RULES**

### **Rule 1 - Equipment**

#### **Section 1 - The Table**

- Article 1 The table shall be of a rectangular surface, 9 feet long and 5 feet wide. It shall be supported in such a way that the entire surface shall be a uniform height of 30 inches above the floor.
- Article 2 It shall be made of any material and shall yield a uniform bounce of 8 to 9 inches when a UTTSA -approved ball is dropped from a height of 12 inches above its surface.
- Article 3 The upper surface of the table shall be termed the "playing surface". It shall be non-reflecting and of a dark color. The playing surface shall have a white line, 3/4 inch wide, along each edge of the table. The line along each 9-foot side is called the "side" line. The line along each 5-foot end is called the "end" line.
- Article 4 For doubles, the playing surface shall be divided into halves by a white line, 1/8 inch wide, running parallel with the side lines, termed the center line. The center line shall be regarded as part of each right half court.
- Article 5 The playing surface shall be considered to include the top edges of the table, but not the sides of the table top below the edge.

#### **Section 2 - The Net and Its Supports**

The playing surface shall be divided into two courts of equal size by a net running parallel to the end lines, at an equal distance of 4 feet 5 inches from each. The net and its suspension together shall be 6 feet long. Its upper part along its entire length shall be 6 inches above the playing surface. Its lower part shall be as close as possible to the playing surface. The net shall be suspended at each end by an upright post 6 inches high. The outside limits of these posts shall be 6 inches outside the side lines. The USTTA only approves nets that are suspended by a cord.

#### **Section 3 - The Ball**

The ball shall be spherical with a diameter of 40 millimeters. The ball shall weigh 2.7 grams. It shall be made of celluloid or similar plastic and shall be white, orange or matte in appearance.

#### **Section 4 - The Racket**

- Article 1 The racket may be of any material, size, shape, or weight but the blade shall be flat and rigid. At least 85% of the blade by thickness shall be natural wood. A side of the blade used for striking the ball shall be covered with ordinary pimples rubber with the pimples

outward having a total thickness of not more than 2 millimeters, or sandwich rubber with pimples inwards or outward having a total thickness including adhesive of not more than 4 millimeters. The surface of the covering material on a side of a blade or of a side of a blade if left uncovered shall be matt, bright red on one side and black on the other. The covering material shall not extend up to but not beyond the limits of the blade, except that the part nearest the handle and gripped by the fingers may be left uncovered or covered with any material and may be considered part of the handle.

- Article 2 If a player strikes the ball in play with a side of the blade whose surface does not comply with the requirements of the rules, his/her opponent will be awarded a point.

### **Rule 2 - Definitions**

#### **Section 1 - Playing Terms**

- Article 1 A rally is the period during which the ball is in play.
- Article 2 The ball is in play from the last moment at which it is stationary on the palm of the free hand before being intentionally projected in service until it touches anything other than the playing surface, the net assembly, the racquet held in the racquet hand or the racquet hand below the wrist, or until the rally is otherwise decided a let or a point.
- Article 3 A let is a rally of which a result is not scored.
- Article 4 A point is a rally of which the result is scored.
- Article 5 The racquet hand is the hand carrying the racquet. The free hand is the hand not carrying the racquet.
- Article 6 A player strikes the ball if he touches it in play with his/her racquet, held in the racquet hand, or with his racquet hand below the wrist.
- Article 7 A player obstructs the ball if he/she or anything the player wears or carries, touches it in play when it is traveling toward the playing surface and has not passed beyond the end line, not having touched his/her court since last being struck by the opponent.
- Article 8 The server is the player due to strike the ball first in a rally. The receiver is the player due to strike the ball second in a rally.
- Article 9 The ball shall be regarded as passing over or around the net assembly if it passes under or outside the projection of the net assembly outside the table.

### **Rule 3 - Singles Play**

#### **Section 1 - The Game/Match**

- Article 1 A game shall be won by the player who first wins 11 points. If both players have scored 10 points, then the winner of the game shall be the one who first wins 2 points more than his opponent.

Article 2 A match shall consist of the best three out of five games.

### **Section 2 - The Choice and Ends of Serve**

Article 1 In every match the choice of ends and the determination of the server and receiver shall be decided by toss. The winner of the toss may choose either the end he desires or the right to be either the server or receiver. If he chooses the end he/she desires, the loser will have the choice of being server or receiver or vice versa.

Article 2 The player serving first in a game shall receive first in the next game of the match. The player at one end in a game shall start at the other end in the next game of the match and in the last possible game of a match the players shall change ends when first one player scores 5 points.

### **Section 3 - Changes and Ends of Serve**

Each player shall have serve for two serves. After each two serves, the server shall become the receiver, and the receiver shall become the server for the next two points. The players shall alternate in this method until the end of the game unless the score becomes 10-all. At the score 10-all, the order of serve will continue to alternate as above and in the same order, but each server shall serve for only one point, and the serve shall alternate after each point until the end of the game.

### **Section 4 - Out of Order of Ends or Serve**

Article 1 If the players fail to change ends at the proper time they shall change ends as soon as the mistake is discovered. If, however, the mistake is not discovered until a game has been completed after the error is made, it shall be ignored. In all circumstances points scored before the mistake is discovered shall be counted.

Article 2 If the receiver acts as server out of his turn, the following procedure shall take place:

- a. As soon as the mistake is discovered, the player who should have served shall immediately become the server for the balance of the serves he/she was to serve. After this, the serve will alternate and continue in its original order.
- b. If a group of two such serves is completed before the mistake is discovered, the error shall be ignored and the serve shall continue in the same order as though the sequence had been continuous.
- c. In all circumstances, points scored before the mistake is discovered shall be counted.

### **Section 5 - The Order of Play**

The server shall first make a good serve. The receiver shall make a good return; and thereafter, server and receiver shall make a good return.

### **Section 6 - A Good Serve**

Article 1 Service shall begin with the ball resting on the palm of the server's stationary free hand.

Article 2 The free hand and the racket shall be above the level of the playing surface from the last moment at which the ball is stationary on the palm of the free hand until the ball is struck in service.

Article 3 The server shall then project the ball upwards, by hand only and without imparting spin, so that it rises at least 16 cm after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck.

Article 4 As the ball is falling, the server shall strike it so that it touches first his/her own court and then passing directly over or around the net assembly touches the receiver's court.

Article 5 From the start of the service until it is struck, the ball shall be above the level of the playing surface and behind the server's end line, and it shall not be hidden from the receiver by any part of the body or clothing of the server.

Article 6 If, in attempting to serve, a player fails to strike the ball while it is in play, that player shall lose a point.

Article 7 The umpire may, on the first occasion in a match at which he/she has a doubt about the correctness of a player's service, interrupt play and warn the server without awarding a point. On any subsequent occasion in the same match at which the same player's service action is of doubtful correctness, for the same or for any other reason, the player shall not be given the benefit of the doubt and shall lose a point.

### **Section 7 - A Good Return**

Article 1 The ball, after being served or returned in play, shall be struck by the player on the first bounce so that it passes directly over or around the net assembly and touches the opponent's court, either directly or after touching the net assembly.

Article 2 If the ball, either served or returned during play, returns under its own impetus over or around the net, it may be struck so that it touches directly the opponent's court.

Article 3 If a player drops the racket, he/she may not return the ball with an empty hand. (The racket hand is the hand holding the racket).

Article 4 If in returning the ball, the racket leaves the player's hand, it is a good return only if it is still in the hand at the instant of contact with

the ball, and if it does not touch the net or its supports, or move the playing surface.

Article 5 If the ball, in passing over or around the net or its supports, touches the net or its supports, it is considered to have passed directly, except as referred to in Rule 3, Section 8, Item a.

#### **Section 8 - A Let**

A rally is a let:

- a. If in service the ball, in passing over or around the net assembly, touches it, provided the serve is otherwise good or is obstructed by the receiver or his partner
- b. If the serve is delivered when the receiver is not ready, provided the receiver does not attempt to strike the ball.
- c. If a player is prevented from making a good serve or return due to an accident not under their control.
- d. If a player loses a point under Rule 3, Section 9, Items a-g.

#### **Section 9 - A Point**

Unless the rally is a let, a player shall score a point:

- a. If his/her opponent fails to make a good service.
- b. If his/her opponent fails to make a good return.
- c. If, after he/she has made a good service or good return, the ball touches anything other than the net assembly before being struck by his opponent.
- d. If the ball passes beyond his/her end line without touching his/her court, after being struck by his/her opponent
- e. If his opponent obstructs the ball, except for provided in Rule 3, Section 8, Item a.
- f. If his opponent strikes the ball twice successively.
- g. If his/her opponent strikes the ball with a side of the racquet blade having an illegal surface.
- h. If his/her opponent, or anything the opponent wears or carries, moves the playing surface.
- i. If his/her opponent, or anything the opponent wears or carries touches the net assembly.
- j. If his/her opponent's free hand touches the playing surface.
- k. If, in doubles, his/her opponent strikes the ball out of sequence established by the first server and first receiver.
- l. If the umpire assesses a penalty point against his opponent.

#### **Section 10 - Intervals**

Play shall be continuous throughout a match except that any player is entitled to:

- a. An interval of up to 1 minute between successive games of a match.
- b. Brief intervals for toweling after every 6 points from the start of each game and at the change of ends in the last possible game of a match.
- c. A player or pair may claim one time-out period of up to 1 minute during a match. The request for time-out shall be made only when the ball is out of play, shall be made by making a "T" sign with the hands. Play may be resumed when the player or team who called the time-out is ready to continue or at the end of the one minute, whichever is sooner.
- d. If anyone in the playing area is bleeding, play shall be suspended immediately and shall not resume until that person has received medical treatment and all traces of blood have been removed from the playing area.

#### **Section 11 - Expedite Rule**

Article 1 Except where both players or pairs have scored at least 9 points, the expedite rule shall come into operation if a game is unfinished after 10minutes play or at any earlier time at the request of both players or pairs:

- a. If the ball is in play when the game is interrupted, play shall restart with service by the player who served in the rally that was interrupted.
- b. If the ball was not in play when the game was interrupted, play shall restart with service by the player who received service in the immediately preceding rally.

Article 2 Thereafter, each player shall serve 1 point in turn. If the receiving player makes thirteen successive good returns, the receiver shall score a point

Article 3 Once introduced, the expedite system shall remain in operation for the remainder of the match.

#### **Rule 4 - Doubles**

The rules for singles shall apply to the doubles game, except as outlined below.

#### **Section 1 - Table**

For doubles, the playing surface shall be divided into halves by a white line 1/8 inch wide, running parallel with the side lines, termed the center line. The center line shall be regarded as part of each right half court.

### **Section 2 - Good Serve**

The serve must be delivered as otherwise provided in Rule 3, Section 6. In doubles the ball shall touch successively the right half court of the server and the receiver. (If the ball touches the center line, it is considered as having struck the court.)

### **Section 3 - Choice of Order of Play**

Article 1 The pair who have the right to serve the first five serves in any game shall decide which partner shall do so. The opposing pair shall then decide similarly which shall be the first receiver.

Article 2 In doubles, the server shall first make a good service, the receiver shall then make a good return, the partner of the server shall then make a good return, the partner of the receiver shall then make a good return, and thereafter, each player alternately in that sequence shall make a good return.

### **Section 4 - Choice and Ends of Serve**

Article 1 To determine the ends for the pairs and the pairs to serve first, see Rule 3, Section 2, Article 1, and consider the winner by means of a coin toss.

Article 2 When one player or pair has chosen to serve or receive first or to start at a particular end, the other player or pair shall have the other choice.

Article 3 After 2 points have been scored, the receiving pair shall become the serving pair and so on until the end of the game, unless both pairs score 10 points or the expedite system is in operation, when the sequence of serving and receiving shall be the same but each player shall serve for only 1 point in turn.

Article 4 In each game of a match, the pair who has the right to serve first shall decide which of them shall do so and in the first game of a match, the opposing pair shall decide which partner will receive first. In subsequent games of a match, the first server having been chosen, the first receiver shall be the player who served to him/her in the preceding game.

Article 5 In doubles, at each change of service the previous receiver shall become the server and the partner of the previous server shall become the receiver.

Article 6 The pair serving first in a game shall receive first in the next game of the match, and in the last possible game of a doubles match, the pair due to receive next shall change their order of receiving when one pair scores 5 points.

Article 7 The pair starting at one end in a game shall start at the other end in the next game of the match and in the last possible game of a match the pair shall change ends when first one pair scores 5 points.

Article 8 If a player serves or receives out of his turn, play shall be interrupted and shall continue with that player serving or receiving who should be server or receiver respectively at the score that has been reached according to the sequence established at the beginning of the match, and in doubles, to the order or serving chosen by the pair having the right to serve first in the game in which the error is discovered.

Article 9 If by mistake the players have not changed ends should have been changed, play shall be interrupted as soon as the error is discovered and the players shall change ends.

Article 10 If any circumstances, all points scored before the discovery of an error shall be reckoned.

### **Section 5 - Out of Order of Receivers**

If a player receives out of his/her turn, the error shall be corrected immediately. If it is not discovered until after five such points are completed, it shall be ignored and play shall continue in the same order as though it has been continuous. In all circumstances, point scored before the mistake is discovered shall be counted.

### **Section 6 - Order of Play**

The server shall first make a good serve; the receiver shall make a good return; the partner of the server shall make a good return; the partner of the receiver shall make a good return; the server shall make a good return, and thereafter each player alternately shall make a good return, continuing the above sequence.

### **Section 7 - A Let**

A "let" is also declared if the receiver's partner is not ready. (They are deemed ready if the receiver attempts to strike at the ball.)

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