

THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS

THE TABLE

- The upper surface of the table, known as the playing surface, shall be rectangular.
- The playing surface shall be uniformly dark colored and matt, but with a white side line, and a white end line.
- The playing surface shall be divided into 2 equal courts by a vertical net running parallel with the end lines, and shall be continuous over the whole area of each court.
- For doubles, each court shall be divided into 2 equal half-courts by a white center line.

THE NET ASSEMBLY

- The net shall be suspended by a cord attached at each end to an upright post 6 inches high.
- The top of the net, along its whole length, shall be 6 inches above the playing surface.

THE BALL

- The ball shall be spherical, with a diameter of 1.5 inches.
- The ball shall weigh 2.7g.
- The ball shall be made of celluloid or similar plastics material and shall be white or orange, and matt.

THE RACKET

- The racket may be of any size, shape or weight but the blade shall be flat and rigid.
- A side of the blade used for striking the ball shall be covered with either ordinary pimples rubber, with pimples outwards or sandwich rubber, with pimples inwards or outwards,
- *Ordinary pimples rubber* is a single layer of non-cellular rubber, natural or synthetic, with pimples evenly distributed over its surface.
- *Sandwich rubber* is a single layer of cellular rubber covered with a single outer layer of ordinary pimples rubber.
- At the start of a match and whenever he changes his racket during a match a player shall show his opponent and the umpire the racket he is about to use and shall allow them to examine it.

DEFINITIONS

- A *rally* is the period during which the ball is in play.
- 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 the rally is decided as a let or a point.
- A *let* is a rally of which the result is not scored.
- A *point* is a rally of which the result is scored.
- The *racket hand* is the hand carrying the racket.
- The *free hand* is the hand not carrying the racket; the *free arm* is the arm of the free hand.
- A player *strikes* the ball if he touches it in play with his racket, held in the hand, or with his racket hand below the wrist.
- A player *obstructs* the ball if he, or anything he wears or carries, touches it in play when it is above or traveling towards the playing surface, not having touched his court since last being struck by his opponent.
- 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.
- The *umpire* is the person appointed to control a match.
- The *assistant umpire* is the person appointed to assist the umpire with certain decisions.
- Anything that a player *wears or carries* includes anything that he was wearing or carrying, other than the ball, at the start of the rally.
- The ball shall be regarded as passing *over or around* the net assembly if it passes anywhere other than between the net and the net post or between the net and the playing surface.
- The *end line* shall be regarded as extending indefinitely in both directions.

THE SERVICE

- Service shall start with the ball resting freely on the open palm of the server's stationary free hand.

- The server shall then project the ball near vertically upwards, without imparting spin, so that it raises at least 6in after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck.
- As the ball is falling the server shall strike it so that it touches first his court and then, after passing over or around the net assembly, touches directly the receiver's court; in doubles, the ball shall touch successively the right half court of server and receiver.
- From the start of 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 the server or his doubles partner or by anything they wear or carry.
- As soon as the ball has been projected, the server's free arm and hand shall be removed from the space between the ball and the net.
- Any subsequent service of doubtful legality of that player or his doubles partner will result in a point to the receiver.
- Whenever there is a clear failure to comply with the requirements for a correct service, no warning shall be given and the receiver shall score a point.

THE RETURN

- The ball, having been served or returned, shall be struck so that it passes over or around the net assembly and touches the opponent's court, either directly or after touching the net assembly.

THE ORDER OF PLAY

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

A LET

- The rally shall be a let
- if in service the ball, in passing over or around the net assembly, touches it, provided the service is otherwise correct or the ball is obstructed by the receiver or his partner
- if the service is delivered when the receiving player or pair is not ready, provided that neither the receiver nor his partner attempts to strike the ball.

A POINT

- Unless the rally is a let, a player shall score a point
- if his opponent fails to make a correct service
- if his opponent fails to make a correct return
- if, after he has made a service or a return, the ball touches anything other than the net assembly before being struck by his opponent
- if the ball passes over his court or beyond his end line without touching his court, after being struck by his opponent
- if his opponent obstructs the ball
- if his opponent strikes the ball twice successively
- if his opponent, or anything his opponent wears or carries, moves the playing surface
- if his opponent, or anything his opponent wears or carries, touches the net assembly
- if his opponent's free hand touches the playing surface
- if a doubles opponent strikes the ball out of the sequence established by the first server and first receiver

A GAME

- A game shall be won by the player or pair first scoring 11 points unless both players or pairs score 10 points, when the game shall be won by the first player or pair subsequently gaining a lead of 2 points.

A MATCH

- A match shall consist of the best of any odd number of games.

THE ORDER OF SERVING, RECEIVING AND ENDS

- The right to choose the initial order of serving, receiving and ends shall be decided by lot and the winner may choose to serve or to receive first or to start at a particular end.

- When one player or pair has chosen to serve or to receive first or to start at a particular end, the other player or pair shall have the other choice.
- After each 2 points have been scored the receiving player or pair shall become the serving player or pair and so on until the end of the game, unless both players or pairs score 10 points or the expedite system is in operation, when the sequences of serving and receiving shall be the same but each player shall serve for only 1 point in turn.
- In each game of a doubles match, the pair having the right to serve first shall choose which of them will do so and in the first game of a match the receiving pair shall decide which of them will receive first; in subsequent games of the match, the first server having been chosen, the first receiver shall be the player who served to him in the preceding game.
- 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.
- The player or 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 first one pair scores 5 points.
- The player or 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 players or pairs shall change ends when first one player or pair scores 5 points.

OUT OF ORDER OF SERVING, RECEIVING OR ENDS

- If a player serves or receives out of turn, play shall be interrupted by the umpire as soon as the error is discovered and shall resume with those players serving and receiving who should be
- In any circumstances, all points scored before the discovery of an error shall be reckoned.

TERMS

- 1.) **BACKHAND**--stroke played by a right-handed player on his left-hand side.
- 2.) **BACKSPIN**--spin imparted on the ball by the chop stroke.
- 3.) **BLOCK SHOT**--method of returning the ball by letting it hit the paddle and rebound over the net using its own speed.
- 4.) **CHOP**--a player deliberately imparts backspin on the ball by bringing the paddle downwards, behind and underneath it at the moment of impact.
- 5.) **CUT**--to chop.
- 6.) **DROP SHOT**--played to deceive an opponent who has been driven well away from the table.
- 7.) **FOREHAND**--stroke played by a right-handed player on his right-hand side; or vice versa for a left handed player.
- 8.) **GAME**--a series of rallies played until one player or doubles pair scores 21 pts; or if the score reaches 20-each, has a two point advantage.
- 9.) **KILL**--to drive the ball fiercely so that an opponent has little chance of returning it.
- 10.) **MATCH**--a continuous contest between two players or pairs.
- 11.) **PEAK TIMING**--hitting the ball at the top of the bounce.
- 12.) **RALLY**--the length of time the ball is in play from when it is served until one player fails to return it correctly.
- 13.) **SERVICE**--the means of starting a rally.
- 14.) **TOPSPIN**--spin imparted by brushing the paddle upwards and forwards across the rear of the ball on impact.
- 15.) **VOLLEY**--a ball which has not yet bounced.