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A Brief History Of Table Tennis

By Evert DuToit

If you watch the sports channels on TV, such as ESPN, a lot, you're likely to catch a game of table tennis every so often. Table tennis, often called ping pong, is played on a wooden table, with a plastic ball and paddles covered in rubber and a net dividing the playing surface. It is sometimes called the miniature version of tennis since the rules are so similar.

Table tennis is a fun and exciting sport and it is easy to learn. A big advantage to taking up table tennis is that you don't need to spend a lot of money on expensive equipment. The most expensive part is obviously the table. You can find inexpensive ping pong sets, consisting of the net, 2 paddles and a number of balls, in almost any department store in the toy or sporting goods section.

The game of table tennis was invented in England in the 1880's by rich Victorians looking for an activity to be played indoors. When the game was first played, books served as a net, a knot of string or a champagne cork was used as a ball and cigarette box lids were employed as paddles. Apparently people enjoyed this newly invented game with its make-shift equipment, since it continued to grow in popularity.

Improvements were made to the equipment during the early 1900's. The balls were being made from celluloid and the paddles consisted of a piece of rubber glued to a wooden handle. The word ping pong originated because of the distinctive sound the ball made when hit with the rubber paddle. And Parker Brothers opted to go with the ping pong name when they introduced the game to the United States.

With the commercial availability of the equipment, the game continued to grow in popularity and the first tournament was held in 1902. In 1921 the Table Tennis Association was founded in England and less than 10 years later, the first World Championships also took place there.

Over time the sport spread to other parts of the world. In the Far Eastern countries, such as China, it is called ping pong, while in other countries similar terms in the native language are used.

The 1950's rolled around and other innovations were made. As an example, a sponge layer was added to the paddles over the rubber, making the paddles lighter and easier for the players to use. And finally,

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after being around for more than a century, table tennis was included as an Olympic Sport in 1988.

In the latter part of 2000, the international body governing the rules of table tennis introduced more changes. They decided to increase the size of the plastic ball used in tournaments from 38mm to 40mm. This was an attempt to slow the game down a little. They also made changes to the way the game was scored, now using a 11 point system as opposed to the traditional 21 points, which makes each set fast and exciting for the players and spectators.

Enjoy your experiences with table tennis, and remember to keep your eye on the ball.

Evert DuToit is the webmaster and publisher of

<http://www.tabletennisfacts.com/>

where you'll find

informative articles on table tennis.

What Is Ping Pong?

By Alfred J. James

Table tennis is a sport where two players hit a ball back and forth to each other, with a racket on a table, in a manner similar to tennis. The rules are slightly different, but the concept is essentially the same. Table tennis is an Olympic sport, "ping-pong" is the recreational version of the same sport. Spin, speed and strategy play an important part in competitive table tennis matches. The speed of the ball can vary from slow spinny serves to fast smashes that travel as fast as 110 km/h.[citation needed]

The playing surface is a 9 ft × 5 ft × 30 in high (2.7 m × 1.5 m × .762 m) hard rectangular table with the surface usually colored green, dark blue, or black. A 6 inch (15.2 cm) tall net divides the table in half (much like a tennis court) and is strung to extend 6 inches (15.2 cm) beyond the table on each side.

It is often difficult for beginners to learn to use the correct footwork. At the beginning, you can get away with poor footwork since it is not the most important part of the game. But as you get better having good footwork becomes more and more important, until it is an essential component of the game in advanced play.

Play is fast and demands possibly the quickest reactions of any sport. A skilled player can impart spin to the ball which makes its bounce difficult to predict or return with confidence. Spin combined with speed makes table tennis an exciting sport to play as well as to watch. The difference between Olympic level play and the average home recreational player is tremendous. Often a proper foundation of table tennis skills is required to understand how competitive players can do what seems impossible to the untrained eye.

Keep your crouching position as much as you can while playing – this helps keep your center of gravity

low, and will help you move around the court more smoothly. Standing up straight will raise your center of gravity, lock your knees and impair your ability to balance and move quickly.

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<http://PingPong.ewhy.info>



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