

Definition: **table tennis** from *Dictionary of Sports and Games Terminology*

(sport) a **game** like **tennis** played on a table, with players using a small rubber-coated **bat** to propel a hollow celluloid **ball** over a **net** strung across the table

Summary Article: **table tennis**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

game played, usually indoors, by two or four players; it is more or less a miniature form of lawn tennis. It is also called Ping-Pong, after the trade name that a manufacturer adopted (c.1900) for the equipment.

The regulation game is played on a table that measures 9 ft by 5 ft (2.74 m by 1.52 m) and stands 2.5 ft (76 cm) from the floor. A transverse net 6 in. (15.25 cm) high divides the surface, which is generally dark in color, edged with white stripes, and halved longitudinally (for doubles play) by another white stripe. The celluloid ball is hollow, seamless, and about 1.5 in. (3.81 cm) in diameter, with a weight of .1 oz (2.8 grams); the racket, or bat, is a wooden paddle with a handle 3 in. (7.62 cm) long and a round blade about 6.5 in. (16.5 cm) long, covered with rubber.

In the service (unlike tennis) the ball must bounce once before clearing the net and again bounce before being struck by the receiver. After the service (only one is allowed, not two as in tennis), the returns should go over the net without bouncing on the near surface. A point is scored when a service does not land properly in play or when a player fails to return the ball properly. Each player in turn serves consecutively five times until the winning score of 21 is reached. (If the score is tied at 20-all, play must continue until a 2-point margin is won.) In doubles matches partners rotate in units of five consecutive services, and the server must deliver the ball into the diagonally opposite box.

Table tennis originated in the late 19th cent. with cork or rubber balls. First popular in England, it spread to several European countries and to the United States in the early 20th cent. The International Table Tennis Federation was founded (1926) to standardize the rules and equipment. The U.S. Table Tennis Association was founded in 1933.

Primarily a recreational sport in the United States, table tennis is a major competitive sport in Asia and parts of Europe. In 1971 the sport achieved a great measure of publicity when, while touring Japan, a U.S. table tennis team was invited to play in China, thereby initiating the first officially sanctioned Sino-American cultural exchange in almost twenty years. Table tennis took its place on the Olympic program in 1988.

See D. Parker; D. Hewitt, *Table Tennis* (1989).

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table tennis. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/table_tennis



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