

Etiquette & Sportsmanship

Overview

Table Tennis has a set of customary social manners and rules that players should follow which makes playing the game fun and enjoyable for everyone involved in St George & Sutherland T.T. Assoc. practice games, Pennants, Team matches and tournaments. The players are expected to conduct themselves on the court in a sportsman-like way and respect their opponents and Umpires. Failure to follow the rules could result in suspension, or termination, of the player's privilege to play at our Association, at the discretion of the leadership team and the board. Following this etiquette will ensure your matches go over smoothly without conflict.

Nets and Edges

It is customary to lift your index finger as an apology when you win a point due to an accidental net or edge shot. Since the point wasn't won due to skill, but rather luck, this is a suggested motion.

Spectators should not clap lucky points.

Celebrating these lucky points will anger a lot of players.



Excessive Cho'ing

Many players, including professionals, will shout in celebration. "Cho" is the most common word of celebration. While celebration is good, excessive (and excessively loud) celebration is often considered rude and distracting. Loud celebration at a tournament can be a major distraction to players in the court next to you.

Celebrating excessively your opponent's faults on serve is not acceptable. There is always debate around exactly how much celebrating is acceptable.

Obey the Rules

There's nothing more frustrating than an opponent having an advantage over you gained by breaking the rules. Here are the most commonly broken rules.

Service Toss

The rule most often broken is when the player fails to toss the ball high enough before striking it. Simply dropping the ball or hitting it out of your hand is not acceptable and creates an unfair advantage by making it easier to generate more spin.

The Serve shall start with the ball resting freely on the OPEN palm of the server's STATIONARY free hand. (ITTF rule 2.06.01).

Service Visibility

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 or her doubles partner or by anything they wear or carry.

Shaking Hands

At a tournament or a Competition, at the conclusion of a match is customary to shake the hands of the opponent, the umpire(s), and the opponent's coach (as well as your own coach). This is the proper sign of respect.

Slapping a person's hand is not acceptable.

Be Honest

Nothing is a better show of sportsmanship when you are honest about a point that you should lose that the umpire calls incorrectly. If the opponent's shot barely nicks the table and the umpire calls it in your favor, be honest about it and award the point to your opponent who earned it. You will be respected for your honesty.

PRACTICE

Block for your opponent. Undoubtedly they'll want to warm up their loop, so you need to *passively* block to let them do that. If you block it back too fast or keep smashing the ball back, they can't comfortably warm up their strokes. During warm-up don't try to "win" the point, just rally. When rallying, you should place your shots in such a way that it allows your opponent to warm up, rather than practicing your winning shots.

If you accidentally miss-hit the ball off the table or to a place that your opponent wasn't expecting it, then apologize and continue the warm up routine. During a warm-up you are trying to be consistent so concentrate on feeding your opponent good balls. Block for your opponent.

Typical flow. If you watch the pros play, they generally follow a structured flow as follows:

1. **Forehand-to-forehand rally (30 seconds).** Simply hit back and forth to your forehands (this assumes both of you are righties or lefties). These are regular counter hits, not loops.
2. **One player starts looping (20 seconds).** One player will start looping, and the other should block passively to allow them to loop comfortably.
3. **Other player starts looping (20 seconds).** The first player will stop looping and start to block back passively, this indicates that they're done looping.
4. **Repeat steps 1-3 but with the backhand.**

Inspecting the Opponent's Racket

When inspecting the opponent's racket before your match, don't touch the rubber on the playing surface (it's okay to touch it at the bottom where the labeling is). Touching the surface transfers the oils on your fingers to the surface and degrades it, so many people will take offense, especially if you touch the middle or sweet spot.

If you can, just look at the rubber, don't rub the surface. There's not much to be gained from feeling the surface anyway. As long as you know whether it's a grippy rubber or an anti-spin, you should be good to go.

Verbal and Equipment Abuse

Hitting your racket on the table or throwing your racket, screaming, swearing, hitting balls away from an opponent are forms of verbal and equipment abuse and are not tolerated and are grounds for default or a Yellow card in a match.

Umpiring & Scoring Games (by Umpire or Player)

The Umpire must announce the score at the start of each game and after every subsequent point in each game. The umpire should call the score so that it can be heard at the end of the court. The main purpose of the **Score Board** is to allow people watching to know the score.

Umpires must apply the rules of Table Tennis when there is blatant flaunting of the rules. Some players do not realize what they do in their service actions because it is habit.

Ball Going into Another Court

The Umpire should call a "let" if it is disrupting the point being played. This is done by calling "LET" and raising your arm above your head. A Player waiting to retrieve the ball **MUST NOT** call out "let" or enter the court where the ball is until a let is **CALLED** by the umpire or play has stopped and then only after making eye contact with the players involved.

Water Bottles and Players Equipment on the Court

Don't take your **water bottle** onto the court because it is very easy to spill water without noticing it or trip on the bottle and fall over. You may take a **towel** into the court to use, it should be kept in the towel box or close to the Umpires chair. Towels **MUST NOT BE HANG** on the barriers. When changing ends take your towel and put it next to the umpire's chair on your side of the table. **Sponges** which are damp and are used when a floor are slippery to remove dust must be kept under the table near the **NET** and should be removed after your match.

Wiping Hands on Tables

This habit is **FROWNED UPON**. It can be interpreted as a delaying tactic slowing down the game, but the result of wiping your hands on the table is the transfer of disease. You do not know who has wiped their hands on the table before you. After each 6 points played, players are allowed to towel down which includes wiping your hands on a towel. Please **DO NOT** wipe your hands on the tables because apart from the disease side of it, you are leaving **OIL** on the table which will cause the ball to slip/slide on the oily hand prints. If you sweat on the table, please use your towel and wipe it off.

It is recommended that you wash your hands after playing.