

# The Harvard Table Tennis Team

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## *1. Salutations*

Welcome to the Harvard Table Tennis Team!

The team began years before anyone on the current team was around. However, in the past year, we have doubled the size of the team, bought completely new equipment, had an Olympian and Men's National Team member give an exhibition in the MAC, won the New England division twice, and earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 2000 National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA) Championships.

As a team, we collectively try to accomplish the following goals:

1. Train ourselves to achieve a higher level of play.
2. Learn more about table tennis as a competitive sport.
3. Help in the smooth functioning of the Harvard Table Tennis Club, which promotes table tennis in the Harvard community.
4. Increase the exposure, presence, and awareness of table tennis in various colleges.
5. Have a good time playing table tennis.

## *2. How does the team relate to the club?*

The club's purpose is to allow easy access to table tennis for members of the Harvard community. Part of the team's duty is to make this possible. At each club practice, one or two members of the team are required to be present to answer questions, act as hitting partners, and generally make sure the practice functions smoothly. As team members we are employees, supplying table tennis to the people who come to the club.

## *3. Intramurals*

Along with being responsible for the club's operation, the team also is in charge of the Frosh IM Table Tennis Tournament and the House IM Tournament that happen once per semester. The details of these events will be covered when the tournament rolls around. However, it should be noted that team members who play on Team A are not allowed to compete in either tournament.

#### *4. Officers*

President/Treasurer	Marc Manara	manara@fas.harvard.edu
President/Treasurer	Mike Nitsch	nitsch@fas.harvard.edu
Captain-	Silas Xu	sixiaoxu@fas.harvard.edu
Events Coordinator/NE Director	Andrew Holm	aeholm@fas.harvard.edu

Please contact the appropriate officer if you have questions, suggestions, or ideas. We would like to improve the club in any way we can, so please let us know.

#### *5. What is our intercollegiate involvement?*

We participate in the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA), which is a nationwide league divided into multiple divisions. It is expanding at a rapid rate, starting from just the New England area in 1992 to extending from coast to coast this year. Andrew Holm is the current New England Division Director.

Our region includes MIT, Dartmouth, Brown, Brandeis, Wellesley, Wesleyan, Boston University, and Boston College.

#### *6. Format of the NCTTA league and competition*

Teams in the NCTTA are associated by school. Each team must have between 4 and 6 people, which is the range that can play 4 singles matches and 1 doubles match, each best 3 of 5 games or 4 of 7 games up to 11 points. This year, Harvard has three competing teams.

In competition, every team in the division plays every other team. So, technically even teams from the same school play each other. Each team tie consists of the 5 matches described above. While the winning team will obviously be the one that wins three matches first, all 5 matches are played regardless of the outcomes.

In the spring, the winning team of each division is invited to play in the NCTTA Nationals, which are held in late April. In addition, the school that hosts Nationals is allowed to enter a team to play. Last year, we won our division but MIT hosted, so both schools were allowed to enter.

For more details, visit NCTTA's website at [www.nctta.org](http://www.nctta.org). It is a very thorough and informative resource.

#### *7. The USATT*

The USA Table Tennis organization is the central governing body of American table tennis. Its main purpose as it relates to us is its implementation of a national rating system, which allows for meaningful measurement of skill and improvement nationwide.

The rating system is based on points, not rank. In general, when you win a match, you gain a number of points proportional to the difference in ratings between you and your opponent. A similar change in points occurs if you lose. For example, Kyna is rated ~2100. TJ is rated ~1400. If TJ were to lose, Kyna would not gain any points and TJ would not lose any, since the difference between their ratings makes it obvious that Kyna is supposed to win. However, if TJ were to win, he would gain 50 points, the maximum allowed in one match, while Kyna would lose 50.

The USATT has several other functions, of course, which include the organization of events such as tournaments, and the creation of the National teams which represent the United States worldwide. To participate in the ratings system, you must play in USATT-sanctioned tournaments. These occur periodically at MIT and in the Boston area, so if you are interested, please contact Silas to find out how to get started.

## *8. Other Team Events*

We are also looking to expand the number and variety of events we hold as a club this year. Some of our initial ideas are exhibition matches, traveling as a team to play in a USATT tournament, school-wide tournaments, and inviting other schools to play us. If anyone has other ideas, we would be happy to consider them for this school year.

## *9. Rules of the game*

The complete rules of table tennis can be found on the USATT website, which is [www.usatt.org](http://www.usatt.org). However, some of the most important and most often misunderstood rules are below.

Serving-

1. The ball must be held in an open palm, visible above the table, and thrown straight up at least 6 inches (the height of the net) to begin a serve.
2. The **only** requirement in serve placement in singles is that the ball bounce once on your own side, then hit the side of your opponent.
3. The server must make contact with the ball behind the back line of his own side.

Points-

A player wins a point when:

1. His opponent's serve is missed.
2. His opponent fails to make a good return on his serve.
3. A ball struck by his opponent fails to make contact with his own side, either directly or off the net apparatus.
4. His opponent touches the playing surface with a part of his body or something on his person besides the paddle.

Lets-

1. In the event of external interference, such as a foreign ball making its way across the playing area, call a let and stop the point. Take the point over.

## *10. Being a table tennis player*

### Etiquette-

There are some basic rules about table tennis etiquette that we would like you to adhere to as a member of the team.

1. In a match, use a different ball only when the previous one breaks.
2. Do not throw your racket or hit it against the table.
3. Do not attempt to intimidate your opponents through direct verbal or physical confrontation.
4. On a point decided by an edge (the ball hitting a corner of the table) or a net (the ball is not able to be returned well after hitting the net), either say "Sorry" or raise your index finger. Silas can demonstrate this for you.
5. Shake hands after the match.
6. If your opponent is being unusually rude or unsportsman-like and you feel that it is interfering with gameplay in any way, please inform Silas, Marc or Mike.

### Equipment-

We recommend that everyone on the team obtain his/her own racket, as the ones available for lending are of mediocre quality and will possibly be used by someone who will damage them. We also suggest that you purchase your own case and cleaning equipment, as the rubber is susceptible to reduction in tackiness and power via dust. A normal kitchen sponge and water will work well, though there are products designed specifically for this purpose. If you'd like to purchase equipment, please contact Silas for more info.