

USA Table Tennis Club Handbook

Introduction

Table tennis is a sport that emphasizes individualism. Those who play table tennis are often independent, think-for-themselves kind of people. Yet, it is difficult to fully enjoy the game without the association and the comradeship found in a group of people sharing a common interest. In the world of organized sport, that group of players is called a "table tennis club".

Some clubs are formal business-like structures, and others are no more than neighbors having fun. Some have a large membership and permanent playing site, and others have four or five players and hope from month to month that they can stay in the church basement.

Every club has its own special set of problems, both in organization and operation. This manual is an effort to help you, the club organizer, come up with some effective solutions. To assist the community-sponsored club is this booklet's primary goal.

If in the course of your work to start and run a club you come upon any unusual problems or successful solutions or projects, be sure to let us know so that the information might be shared with others.

It's a challenge to start a table tennis club, but it's exciting, rewarding, and (most of the time) fun. Be persistent in your efforts, and you will be rewarded with a great deal of satisfaction.

Why Start a Table Tennis Club?

There are only four feet behind each end of the table, the ceiling is brushing the top of your head, the lighting reminds you of a dungeon, and you've been playing the same guy for the past year. It's time to start a table tennis club!!

A table tennis club can provide more room to play, better lighting, more competition, and the recognition that achievement brings. As an athletic event and social experience, organized table tennis is hard to beat.

Starting Membership

The first step is to find more players interested in starting a club. Some good ways of doing this include:

- The names on the check-out cards in table tennis books at the public library.
- Response to posters put up at the YMCA, college union, community center, high school, and sporting goods stores.
- The sports editor of the local newspaper. There may have been a club in your town at one time, and he may remember some of the players.

Keep in mind that many successful clubs have started with only three or four inexperienced players. However, the more people you can involve, the more fun you can have.

Putting It Together

At your first organizational meeting, a steering committee should be established. The steering committee is a temporary group that will be responsible for the initial development of the club with regard to:

- Finding a place to play
- Finding equipment (i.e., tables and nets)
- Establishing meeting dates and times
- Trying to find a sponsor

When the steering committee has accomplished its tasks, a meeting should be announced to those who have shown an interest and to the general public. At this meeting, a club name should be decided on (usually reflecting the locality or sponsorship) and officers elected.

The club will need a president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer. Each officer has a defined role in the club.

President

- Presides at all meetings of the membership or officers
- Appoints or determines all committees and chairmen
- Aids in conducting correspondence
- Makes periodic reports to the membership

Vice President

- With the approval of the majority of officers, prescribes disciplinary action
- Acts as president in the absence of the president or at the president's direction

Secretary/Treasurer

- Records minutes of meeting
- Prepares and distributes correspondence, notices, agendas, tournament reports, etc., that are not specifically assigned to others
- Responsible for the safe-keeping of club funds
- Keeps an accounting of the club

Committees

It isn't vital that the club's committees be established at the election meeting, but the president should be giving consideration to who will be appointed as committee chairmen. The committees should then be appointed as soon as it is practical to do so. To some people, committees are a necessary evil. However, working on a committee can be a rewarding experience for both the individual and the club. Committees can do the bulk of the club's work and provide a larger number of members with the opportunity to take part in the club's operation. Members will develop a feeling of worth and satisfaction, thereby becoming more active and the potential leaders of the club.

Basically, there are two categories of committees: standing and special. Standing committees are set up to handle a specific part of the club's regular work. They have a limited term (usually the same as the officers) and a well-defined area of responsibility. They must report regularly to the president on their activity. For those situations that aren't covered by a standing committee (such as a fund-raising project or a special tournament), the president may appoint a special committee. Its term of existence will be until the completion of the assigned work.

Standing committees appropriate for a table tennis club are:

Equipment Committee

- Maintains equipment and playing site
- Recommends repairs and new purchases

Tournament Committee

- Conducts matters pertaining to leagues and tournaments sponsored by the club
- Maintains the club ladder, team match records, etc.

Membership Committee

- Develops membership materials (i.e., fact sheet, membership certificates, etc.)
- Acts as a welcoming committee for new members

Activities Committee

- Conducts matters incident to intra-club activities
- Arranges for club banquets, picnics, etc.

Publicity Committee

- Works with the other committees in developing press releases
- Responsible for the writing and dissemination of press releases, posters, etc

[Selecting Committee Members](#)

When deciding who should do what, it is important to keep in mind an individual's personal interests and talents. Equally important is the combination of people who can work together. Don't leave the selection of committee members to chance - give it some hard thought.

[Instructing the Committee](#)

Each committee must have a clearly-defined area of responsibility. Try to be certain that committees don't step on each other's toes. It is best to put the assignments in writing and see to it that each committee member gets a copy.

[Committee Operation](#)

The nature of a committee calls for informality and flexibility. Forget about parliamentary procedure. Keep the atmosphere relaxed and supportive. The chairperson's role is that of a discussion leader. He must be careful not to dictate or dominate the committee's activity.

A written agenda will help keep the discussion on course. A committee secretary should be appointed to keep a detailed record of meetings.

Each committee should have one of the officers as a member. He will have full voting rights but should not be expected to operate the committee in the absence of the chairmen.

Membership

When there is a foundation membership and the club is meeting regularly, each member should be inspired to attract new members. When that potential member comes to the meeting, make him feel comfortable. Pay attention to him. Don't be too pushy but see to it that he has an opportunity to get in on the action.

Another nice touch for the guest and new member is a club fact sheet. It should include:

- A list of current members, addresses, and phone numbers
- A short history of the club
- Regular meeting times
- Copy of the bylaws, if any (see [Sample USATT Club Bylaws](#))
- Dues and any special fees
- List of events for the upcoming year

In addition to the fact sheet, you may consider having membership certificates to present to new members.

The club president and secretary should be keeping a membership file. A simple method is to use a 3" x 5" index card, or you may want to use a computer data base. The information which should be included is the member's name, address, phone number, date he joined, and birthday.

Some additional thoughts on new members:

- Call to remind them of the meeting.
- In some cases, you might offer transportation.
- Be certain he/she is introduced to other club members. Let him/her know that he/she is an important asset to the club.
- Get his/her name into some of the club's activity stories in a club newsletter or the city paper.
- After he/she has been to a few meetings, put him/her to work on a committee or project.

Remember - developing membership is an ongoing activity: "The road to success is always under construction."

Club Regulations

Every organization needs a set of standards to which its members are expected to adhere. Without such regulations and their enforcement, each player will set his/her own standards of conduct and some will be unacceptable.

Here are some rules that should be considered.

- Players will conduct themselves in a sportsman-like manner.
- Loud or offensive language will not be tolerated.
- Willful damage to the club's equipment or the facility will not be tolerated.
- Members will cooperate in setting up and taking down the equipment and in cleaning up the area before leaving.

-There will be no smoking or drinking of an alcoholic beverage at the playing site.

-Table tennis courtesies will be observed.

-A let will be called when a stray ball enters your court.

-No one will unnecessarily pass through a playing area in use.

-"Table hogging" will not be tolerated.

-The Laws of Table Tennis published by USATT will govern all games.

Clothing

To enhance the appearance of your club (making it more attractive to potential members), the USATT dress code should be adopted. It calls for dark or deep pastel, solid-colored shorts and shirts and rubber-soled shoes. No tank tops or cut-offs are permitted. Players must wear shirts.

Finances

Bookkeeping

Club bookkeeping requires a great deal of attention. While it is not expected that the secretary/treasurer become a CPA, the lack of accurate records can be the cause of friction among members.

The secretary/treasurer, by election, becomes the club's chief financial officer. However, he/she should not be expected to work alone. Another member should be appointed to assist the treasurer in record-keeping and paying the bills. This will relieve the burden of responsibility if a mistake is made.

There are three tools needed for the bookkeeping job. They are:

-Two-signature checking account. All bills must be paid by check. This will provide a record of payment. The two-signature check diminishes the opportunity for error.

-Permanently-bound, double-entry ledger book. This is used to keep a running total of expenses and income. It should be kept up to date with each item received and each check written.

-Large manila envelope. The envelope is used to file all bills and receipts. No item relating to the club's finances should be thrown away.

Budget

The budgets of all clubs will vary, primarily due to the extent of the sponsorship. However, it is important that an annual budget be developed. The budget can be divided into two sections:

-Non-recurring expenses. These might include:

Utility deposits

Renovation costs

Permits (plumbing, electrical, etc.)

-Recurring expenses. These might include:

Capital expenses - Tables, nets, barriers, cleaning and refurbishing supplies

Operating expenses - Maintenance supplies, office supplies, postage, printing costs, utilities

Estimate the amount of money needed to satisfy each of the club's expenses, and this will give you an idea of how much income needs to be generated by your fund-raising activities, dues, and sponsorship.

[Club Dues](#)

Membership dues are an economic necessity to most clubs. If your club is fully sponsored and doesn't need the money, dues should still be required for membership. When a person pays for something, he pays attention to it. This brings up the area of free tournaments and coaching clinics - DON'T. Always charge something, even if no more than a token fee.

To facilitate bookkeeping, the membership fee should be due once a year. New memberships can be pro-rated. This means that the fee should be easily divisible by 12. Some clubs collect dues semi-annually. More frequent collection becomes a bookkeeping nightmare.

The individual membership fee for many clubs falls between \$12 and \$24 per year. Family memberships are usually twice the fee for individuals. Junior membership (usually for kids 17 years old and younger) is often one-half the annual fee for individuals.

[Where to Play](#)

Finding a place to play is often one of the most difficult problems to solve in starting a table tennis club. It would be great to find a building fulfilling the requirements listed below. However, take what you can get to get started and keep looking for a better place.

[Facility Requirements](#)

Low Cost - This means that you will be looking for some kind of public building (i.e., city auditorium, school gym, or church basement). To provide funds for rental, it may be necessary to have a small per-night playing fee collected from each player.

Physical Attributes - The minimum floor space for each table is 25 feet long by 13 feet wide. The ceiling should be no less than 10 feet high and uncluttered over the playing area. Wood floors are best, tile next, and then concrete (avoid carpet). Make arrangements to have access to a dry mop and a wet mop to clean the floor before and after you play. A clean floor will benefit the players, and the building proprietor will appreciate the club's efforts in caring for the building.

Usually, you can do little to increase the lighting in a public building. It won't hurt to ask if you can clean the fixtures and install higher wattage bulbs. Incandescent lights are preferable over fluorescent, and all lights should be shade if possible.

Make sure the playing site has restrooms.

[Availability](#)

Most clubs like to meet at least twice a week. Regardless of how often you meet, regularity is imperative. A table tennis club can't be successful if it doesn't have a regular meeting night and time that the members can rely on and that can be promoted to the public.

[How to Find a Place](#)

If your city has a parks and recreation department, this is the first place to go. Frequently, the recreation director is responsible for a city auditorium or recreational facility and may be able to help you. YMCAs, Boy's Clubs, churches, and schools are good prospects. These organizations usually welcome activities that are youth- and family-oriented.

It seldom occurs that a group exhausts the public building search without finding a place to play. If that happens, don't give up. In almost any town, there are merchants who have an upstairs room they don't use. The members may have to do some work to get it into playing condition, but this labor should go some distance in paying the rent. Be aware that you may also be responsible for some utilities.

Whatever you end up with, be certain to give credit to the building proprietor in your news releases. This creates considerable goodwill.

[Equipment](#)

Good equipment adds a great deal to the attractiveness of your club. Look for the USATT "Seal of Approval" on any piece of equipment you buy. It is your assurance that the item meets the standards required for high caliber play.

[Tables](#)

A good table will have no less than a 3/4" top made of high resin particle board painted in a dark, non-reflecting color, usually green. Plywood tops are usually too grainy.

Whether you purchase a fold-away or a two-piece card table type is primarily dependent upon your available storage area. Three two-piece tables can be stored in about the same space required for one fold-away. The fold-away is easier to set up and take down but is generally not as sturdy as the two-piece table.

A table with a steel apron around the perimeter on the underside of the top is less likely to warp, and some players claim that this design plays more "solidly" than one without.

[Nets](#)

Don't try to get by with a cheap net. Many of them are not high enough (must be 6"), do not extend beyond the table sides (6" out from each side), and have a space between the bracket and the end of the net. The better nets have a tension adjustment cord running lengthwise across the top. Make sure the brackets fit your tables.

A good net may seem expensive but is a worthwhile investment. Take a look at several before making a purchase.

[Balls](#)

Table tennis balls vary greatly in quality. Any of the USATT- or ITTF-approved three-star balls are good. Players are expected to provide their own balls though the club should have some available for sale.

Rackets

Club members provide their own rackets. Sandpaper-covered rackets and rackets with no covering (plain wood) are illegal. Most top players use rackets with pips-in smooth rubber. The club should have a few rackets available for guests.

Barriers

Barriers are of great benefit at tournaments. When properly used, they help prevent balls from entering other courts, keep the spectators at a proper distance, speed up play by reducing interference, and make the tournament more enjoyable for the players.

A suitable barrier is a large roll of single-faced corrugated paper that can be snaked around the courts. Barriers should be between 30" and 36" high and a dark or deep pastel color.

Where to Buy

Several department and catalog stores carry tables suitable for club use. With table tennis growing in popularity more and more, sporting goods stores are stocking the better quality rackets and balls.

USATT's official magazine, Table Tennis Today, regularly publishes an approved equipment list and has many dealer ads from which equipment can be ordered by mail.

Intra-Club Activities

In addition to unstructured play at the regular meetings, the club should have some activities that promote regular attendance. Consideration should also be given to developing an activity that allows the less-skilled players to compete against the better players. If you don't, the less-skilled player is likely to get bored and drop out.

Playing Activities

Club Ladder

For this activity, some special materials are needed. They are:

- Metal-rimmed round key tags big enough to put a player's name on.
- Small screw-in type cup hooks - one for each member and a few extra.
- A piece of plywood large enough to position the key tags on it in a triangle.

On the board, lay out a large triangle with enough room for the tags to hang freely from the cup hooks. Screw the hooks into the board. Write each club member's name on a tag and place them on the hooks in the order of playing strength, with the best player at the top. It helps if the hooks are numbered.

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While the rules may vary to suit specific club situations, here is a set that has worked for other clubs.

-You may challenge only on _____ night

-You may issue only two challenges per night

-You may not refuse a challenge

-You may challenge only the two players in attendance that occupy the two posts above and closest to your own

-Movement of rankings is as follows: If the challenged player wins, ranking is not affected. If the challenger wins, he moves to the post of the losing player. The losing player is moved one post below his pre-match position. Players in between these two positions are necessarily moved one post down.

Grand Prix Round Robin

This is an activity that lets the developing players play against the better players in tournament competition.

The procedure is to set up three or four monthly one-day tournaments. Each tournament will be two flights of round-robins. For the first flight, players are divided into groups of four or five with each group having one top player, one advance intermediate, one intermediate, and one beginner. Each of the first groups compete.

The second flight will be groups made up of the top two or three finishers and groups of the bottom two or three finishers. This allows the players to compete against opponents of their own strength.

Inexpensive awards should be given to the top eight players of each monthly tourney.

"Grand prix" points can be awarded each player according to his finish in the monthly tournament - the first-place finisher receiving one point, the second place finisher getting two points, etc. At the end of the tournament series, the player with the fewest points is the grand champion.

[Team Matches](#)

The club can be divided into three-man teams, with each team composed of three levels of players. In each team tie, you can play three singles and two doubles matches.

You may want to set a time limit on how long this activity is to run so that if one team is dominating, you can change teams around and run the event again.

One of the benefits of this activity is that the better player on the team often takes an interest in helping his teammates acquire better skills.

Coaching Clinics

If you're lucky enough to have an experienced player join the club, he/she should be encouraged to conduct a couple of junior coaching clinics. USATT maintains a list of certified coaches and will help you find one in your area.

Social Activities

Non-playing activities should also be a part of the club's program. Socializing in a non-competitive atmosphere with the members and their families goes a long way to building a strong organization.

Club Picnic - Frequently, a club's activity declines in the summer months. A summertime picnic is a great way to get members together. Each family can be responsible for a certain kind of food. The club might provide the hot dogs and drinks. Some recreational equipment (such as horseshoe, Frisbees, etc.) should be available.

Awards Banquet - Towards the end of the playing season, your club may want to have a dinner and at that time recognize those who have made contributions of time and money to the club - both club members and outside sponsors. An easy way to do this is to have a carry-in affair with the club providing the drinks.

Community Involvement - Your club might get involved with an anti-litter campaign, plant trees in the park, provide entertainment at a nursing home or day care center, collect funds for a charitable organization, or participate in some other activity that benefits the community. This kind of effort will help cement the club's relationship with the community.

More - Swim parties, "softball Sunday", and other non-table tennis activities are especially attractive to the junior players and will help build the club's membership if properly promoted.

Inter-Club Activities

As the club develops, you should investigate the possibility of competing against another club in your area. This will provide more varied competition and help create esprit de corps. USATT maintains a list of affiliated clubs and will mail one to you upon request.

Publicity

A good publicity program is essential to your club for expansion of membership, securing and maintaining sponsorship, fund-raising, and community goodwill. The basic function of public relations is communication, and a well-structured publicity program for your club's events will serve to effectively communicate these activities to the general public.

Your first objective is to establish the public identity of your club and explain what its programs accomplish. The community must be made aware that the table tennis club provides a needed service. Here are some ideas you can work with:

-Table tennis is a family sport.

-Kids that are too short, slow, or skinny for school sports have the same need for competitive play as the four-year letterman, and your club can provide that need. Table tennis is a sport in which size is of minor importance.

- Girls can compete on equal footing with boys.
- You can play regardless of the weather.
- Table tennis is a great eye/hand coordinator and is an excellent supplement to other sports.
- Table tennis is inexpensive and most of all FUN.

Your table tennis club can fill a recreation void that exists in every community. You know it and I know it, but you and I can't run the club by ourselves. Let's go out and tell the world how great table tennis is!

What Media?

Seldom will one media do the job. Take a look around to see what is available:

- Newspapers
- Radio
- Television
- Bank's message board
- Posters
- Pamphlets
- Exhibitions at the shopping center
- Recreation department activity catalog
- Direct mail to other racket clubs
- Enclosure with bank or phone statements
- Restaurant table "tent" notices

Stretch your imagination, be creative, but most of all be repetitious. If your story is worth telling once, it's worth telling ten times.

Mechanics of Publicity

Logo - One of the club's first efforts should be to develop a club logo. Keep it simple and uncluttered. You might sponsor a logo contest. Use the logo on all publicity releases, posters, and entry forms.

Director - Your club should have a publicity committee chairman or "public relations director". His first job is to develop a list of the area's editors and broadcasters. Then determine by an advance telephone call the least busy day and time to talk with them. It is best to meet with them before you need their help.

Write down each contact's name, title, phone number, mailing address, when you met them, copy deadline, and any other pertinent information.

The other tools needed for the promotion job are:

Guidelines for preparing copy for the newspaper.

Membership roster with the names spelled correctly.

A program of important events and special projects for the upcoming year.

A datebook to notate deadlines and publicity plans.

A scrapbook of activities! and their promotion as the year progresses.

What is News?

Often the Public Relations person must create news. In a table tennis club, there is a lot of material to work with: club elections, new projects, special guests or speakers, a social or entertainment program, coaching clinics, exhibitions, benefits, competition with other clubs, and tournaments. It's important that when developing a story, you should think first of your goals. Do you want to attract new members, bring players and spectators to a tournament, or promote a fund-raising project? Then write the story in the direction of your goal.

Writing a News Release

Remember: Who, what when, where, why. Try to get all of these points in the first sentence or two of the story. Then fill in the details with the following paragraphs. Each succeeding paragraph should be of declining importance - the "inverted pyramid". This allows the editor to easily cut from the bottom of the story if his space is limited.

Use short words. Write short sentences. Write short paragraphs. Be brief. Usually two double-spaced typewritten pages will get the job done. Forget about adjectives. Spell out numbers from one to ten, and use numerals from 11 up. Never begin a sentence with a numeral. Check all names, dates, times, and places for accuracy.

Keep in mind that a news story is not a free advertisement. Don't leave a number for the sale of tickets. Don't mention door prizes, raffles, or lotteries in newspapers that travel in the mail as this is prohibited by federal law.

How to Prepare Copy

For your story to receive proper attention from the editor, the copy must be prepared in a professional manner. Use plain white 8 1/2" x 11" paper or your club letterhead. Don't use onionskin or erasable paper.

Side margins of 1 1/2" are standard, and you should start typing the copy one-third of the way down the first page. The editor needs this space for a headline and instructions to the printer. At the top of the first page in the upper left-hand corner, list the name of the club. Beneath that, list your name, address, and phone number. This information can be single-spaced.

Type the copy double-spaced, and use only one side of the paper. Indent each paragraph five spaces, and always end each page with a complete sentence or paragraph. When more than one page is needed, write "More" at the bottom of the first page and each succeeding page except the last. On the bottom of the final page, type "#####" to indicate the end of your story. At the top of each new page, write the club name. In the upper right-hand corner, indicated "Page 2 of 2", etc. Drop down one inch below this heading and continue the story.

If you use any unusual names, people, or places, type (sic) after them to indicate that the spelling is correct. Paper clip the pages together - never use a staple. If it is practical, you should hand carry the release to the sports editor.

Fund-Raising

Raising money for equipment, tournaments, or other club projects is a major task. At the same time, it can be a very satisfying activity involving your entire membership. The first job in fund-raising is to sell your cause. A regular publicity program is an important part of your fund-raising activity. Secondly, the project must give something in return for a contribution.

Before you start an activity ask:

- How much money are you trying to raise?
- What is your available manpower?

Each project must have a dollar goal that is attainable. This gives the members something to strive for and, when achieved, a feeling of accomplishment. How many people that are willing to work may determine the kind of project you have. If an "idea clinic" is held in which the members participate in choosing the project, they will be more willing to work at it.

Consider carefully when you are going to hold your event. Be certain that it doesn't conflict with other community activity. Also consider when your workers are available. Perhaps you can coordinate your event with another community group.

During the course of a fund-raising project, be sure that the workers receive recognition for their efforts. Mailings, phone calls of encouragement, and progress reports will stimulate their interest. Remember too that workers enjoy seeing publicity for the cause they're working for.

- Whatever your money raising project, run it like a business.
- Keep accurate records.
- Publicize the activity.
- Use regular business forms for billing.
- Be dependable - do what you say you will.
- If you take merchant donations, give a receipt.
- Keep a file of benefactors.
- Determine how many members will help with the project.
- Figure costs and profits closely.
- Hold an "idea clinic" and let members participate in planning the project.

Legal Primer

If you follow these recommendations, you will minimize the possibility of any legal problems with your fund-raising project. Before beginning the project, check with the appropriate government officials to see if there are any restrictions to the activity.

Local Officials

- Board of health for food booths
- Police department for sidewalk obstructions
- City attorney for lotteries or raffles

State Officials

- Secretary of state for sales tax questions
- State attorney for lotteries or raffles

Federal Officials

-IRS regional director to obtain a tax-deductible ruling

Keep in mind that regulations governing club activities vary from one community to another. Generally, any game of chance (raffles, door prizes, etc.) falls into the category of a lottery. Before using the phrase "contributions may be deducted from income tax", obtain a ruling from your district director of revenue.

[How Not to Ask for Money](#)

-Not asking - It would be great that in working hard at making your club a good one, folks would take notice and make a contribution. They won't.

-Not asking family and friends - Didn't grandma buy the most Girl Scout cookies?

-Beating around the bush - Don't hem and haw and hint at what you want. Tell your story outright with your outstretched hand.

-Being dishonest - Tell the truth about what you are doing and why your club needs the money.

-Begging, apologizing, or demanding - People need to be convinced that you believe in your club and that their contribution is not a charity or obligation but rather a privilege.

-Not knowing the financial side of your club - When you ask for money, you should know how it is going to be used and how it has been used in the past.

-Punting on the third down - Don't give up. The fourth person or the fourth pitch to the same person just might do the trick. People admire persistence.

-Taking "yes" for an answer - Chances are that if they gave once, they'll give again.

[Final Note on Fund-Raising](#)

When the project is completed, each worker should receive a personally written "thank you" from the club president and project chairman.

[Tournaments](#)

One of the rewards of organized club activity is the recognition that comes from competitive play - the table tennis tournament. Whether the tournament is on the club level or a multi-state regional, it requires the planning and work of many hands.

USATT publishes a Tournament Handbook that is a virtual encyclopedia of information on tournament organization and operation.

[Types of Tournaments](#)

Tournaments are classified as open, closed, or invitational. Open tournaments allow any player to participate. A closed tournament is limited to players in a specific geographical area or organization. An invitational tournament is when the participants are chosen by the tournament committee and invited to play. Club and city championships are "closed" tournaments.

Tournament Season

Junior eligibility and other USATT age requirements are based on a July 1 to June 30 year. For example, if you have a "17 Years Old and Under" event in your city tournament and a player signs up whose 18th birthday is on July 2, the rule allows him to play. If his birthday is June 30, he is not eligible to play. July 1 is the cut-off date.

Entry Fees

The entry fees should be set to cover the cost of running the tournament; however, they should be kept as low as possible. The fees for the youth events are usually about a third of the adult entry fees. Finding a sponsor for the tournament or just the trophies will keep the fees low and let the club show a profit.

Awards

For club and most closed tournaments, trophies are the appropriate award. Trophies are usually given to the top three finishers in singles competition and the top two teams in doubles. You may find a sponsor who is willing to provide gifts instead of trophies. While this is fine for the adult players, it may be disastrous for the juniors. Receiving an award that has monetary value for competitive play may jeopardize their eligibility for school, AAU, Junior Olympics, and Olympic-sponsored events. Take no chances - trophies, medals, ribbons, or certificates for the kids.

Entry Blank

The entry blank is your tournament information sheet and entry form. It is the basic advertisement for the tournament and must be sufficiently complete to answer the normal questions a player might ask. Entry blanks for large tournaments should be mailed four to five weeks prior to the event. For city and club tournaments, you should expect to take the entries up to one-half hour prior to the event.

Entry Blank Information

- Date and time of the tournament.
- Where it will be held.
- Name of the sponsor and club.
- The statement "Only USATT-approved equipment will be used".
- Qualifications for entrants; i.e., membership and age requirements.
- Clothing requirements - USATT dress code.
- The words "All USATT rules will apply".
- Entry deadline.
- Name and phone number of the tournament director.

Tournament Format

The format of a tournament or tournament events can be single elimination, double elimination, round-robin, or a combination of these formats.

Single Elimination - This format is the simplest to set up and run. It has the fewest number of matches for a given number of entries. It is the most common format for championship and class singles events when there is a large number of players. Preliminary matches should be two out of three. Semi-finals and finals should be three out of five.

Double Elimination - This is a good format when there is insufficient information for seeding players and you don't have too many entries. Matches should be two out of three, including the finals.

Round-Robin - This format provides maximum play and is practical when there are few entries or when it is used as one stage of an event such as the semi-finals of a single- or double-elimination event. Round-robins are popular among players and should be used as often as possible for junior, women's, and novice events. All matches in a round-robin should be two out of three.

Combinations - A round-robin followed by single elimination for semi-finals and finals is appropriate for most events when round-robin play is desired but there are too many entries for a full round-robin. You could also have a single elimination down to the last four players and then a round-robin.

Events

There are a number of events that players have come to expect when going to a tournament; however, it is your tournament and you can add or subtract as it fits your needs. Here is a list of popular events:

- Championship or Open Singles
- Class "A" (Advanced Intermediate Players)
- Class "B" (Intermediate Players)
- Novice (Beginners)
- Women's Singles
- 17 Years and Under Singles
- 15 Years and Under Singles
- 13 Years and Under Singles
- 11 Years and Under Singles
- Championship or Open Doubles
- Class "A" Doubles
- Mixed Doubles
- Junior Doubles

Seeding

The draw, or seeding, is one of the most important elements of a successful tournament. The two principal purposes of the draw are to systematically select and separate the top players and separate as much as possible players from the same area. In round-robin events, seeding is normally limited to one or two players into each of the groups.

After the draw is posted, no change can be made without the consent of all players affected by any proposed change. Once play has begun in an event, no change can be made in the draw of that event.

Final Note on Entry Form

There are three publications that you should secure and review prior to organizing and running a tournament:

- ITTF Match Officials Handbook
- USATT Tournament Guide
- USATT Laws of Table Tennis

USA Table Tennis

Organized in 1933 and headquartered at the U. S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA Table Tennis is the sport's national governing body. USATT is dedicated to the advancement of the game, benefiting players, tournament directors, and clubs. USATT is responsible for:

- Sanctioning tournaments
- Publishing a periodic magazine - Table Tennis Today
- National championship annually
- International "open" championship annually
- National sports festival tournament
- Sending a U.S. team to the World Championships
- Sending a U.S. team to the Pan American Games
- Sending a U.S. team to the Olympics
- Conducting training camps for players and coaches
- Developing materials for instruction and tournament/club operation

You can contact USA Table Tennis at 719-866-4583, or at usatt@usatt.org

Club Affiliation Benefits

When a club affiliates with USATT, it becomes eligible for the following benefits:

- Free subscription to USA Table Tennis Magazine
- Club insurance. Contact USATT for details.
- Placement on the national mailing list to receive tournament notices and other information
- Club may hold "sanctioned" tournaments with the approval of the USATT
- Club may retain 15% of fees paid for individual and family memberships in the USATT
- Recognition of your club by USATT, including a Certificate of Affiliation
- Club resource manuals, including:
 - *Club Handbook
 - *Tournament Guide
 - *Official USATT Handbook
 - *Instructor's Guide
 - *Tournament Forms
- Subscription to USA Table Tennis Magazine, USATT's national magazine
- Retention of 15% of all fees collected for individual USATT memberships
- Notification of many area and regional tournaments
- Club membership cards for each player
- USATT program updates and new materials
- Other materials at the [USATT Club Programs Page](#)