



SAFETY & ETIQUETTE RULES OF TABLE TENNIS

Draft Version 1.0



ETIQUETTE RULES

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 ARARAT TT practice games, sponsored friendship games, team matches and tournaments.

The players are expected to conduct themselves on the court in a sportsman-like way and respect their opponent. *Failure to follow the rules could result in suspension, or termination, of the player's privilege to play at Ararat, at the discretion of the leadership team and the board.*

Following this etiquette will ensure your matches go over smoothly without conflict.

1. **Table Match Protocol** – A player can play in any table they wish, by asking to play the winner. The winner of the match is allowed to remain at the table or may choose to allow the loser to stay. This protocol ensures that: everyone gets table access, can play a variety of different people and skill levels, and promotes building friendships.

Generally matches are best of 3 or 5 games, with each game set for 11 points. To request being the next to play on a particular table, you simply ask and wait for your turn. The winner of the match gets to remain at the table to play the next challenger. However, we do suggest the winner not to take over a table for more than ½ hour --- Please do not overwork yourself since it might be a health hazard for people over 40.

2. **At the start of a game** – Shake your opponent's hand, introduce yourself and the club you belong to, and say "may the best player win the game".
3. **Play time warm up** – During practice sessions when either player has not warmed up at all a longer warm-up is acceptable. But if players are waiting for the table then the warm-up should never be



SAFETY & ETIQUETTE RULES OF TABLE TENNIS

Draft Version 1.0

longer than 10 minutes. We recommended to warm-up with your opponent for 2 minutes only before start of any major TT events - friendship games and tournaments.

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. Typical rally flow is structured as follow:

- a) 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.
- b) One player starts looping (20 seconds). One player will start looping, and the other should block passively to allow them to loop comfortably.
- c) 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.
- d) Repeat steps a-c but with the backhand.

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. 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.

4. **During games** if you feel your opponent has made a bad call judgment, you may ask the opponent once, if they were sure you may not argue, refuse to play or unconditionally state that calls are bad. Consult an activity/floor committee member to help resolve the issue. During professional tournaments, an umpire or a referee can be assigned to oversee the game.
5. **Serving Time** - While the rules provide for 20 seconds serving time, a player should not abuse the serving time allotted and the receiver must play to the reasonable pace of the server (about 10 to 12 seconds) if the server is ready. You may not use the time in between points to regain condition (rest or catch your breath)
6. **Service Toss A** - During the service toss, the ball must be visible while resting on player's open palm ready for server. A player must toss the ball 6" high before striking it. It must remain visible above and behind the table at all times. 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. It is common for players to drop their serving hand below the table during the service motion--that is illegal.
7. **Service Toss B** - When tossing the ball, your body must not cover the point of contact between the ball and paddle. By hiding this contact, the server is able to disguise the serve illegally. Usually the player will leave the free arm (the one that tossed the ball) in front, covering the ball when it is struck. Please remove your free arm so the receiver can see the serve.
8. **Verbal and equipment abuse** - Hitting your racket to 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.



SAFETY & ETIQUETTE RULES OF TABLE TENNIS

Draft Version 1.0

9. **Apologizing for Table Edge/Net Serve** - If the opponent's shot barely notch the table be honest about it and award the point to your opponent who earned it. If your winning serve scratch the net table, it is customary to lift your index finger as an apology since the point wasn't won due to skill, but rather luck. You will be respected for your honesty. Note - once a ball passes the end of the table the point is lost - it doesn't matter if your opponent hits it or not.
10. **During practice games** you may "challenge" the winner at a table for the next game. Generally, players should try to only challenge opponents who are close to you in ability. But if you happen to be the better player challenged by a weaker player, be a good sport about it. Play your game but there is no reason you have to be arrogant and try to humiliate a fellow club member. If the difference in playing ability is too much, use the time as a chance to "give back" and coach the lower-level player and perhaps do some practice drills.
11. **Racket Inspection** - You are permitted by the rules to inspect your 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 anyways. As long as you know whether it's an inverted (smooth), anti-spin or pips-out rubber, you should be good to go. Once a match has started, neither player can change rackets unless the racket becomes unfit for play (e.g., broken handle, rubber comes loose, etc.)
12. **Keeping Score** - The server must announce the score at the start of each game and at the start of the second point and each subsequent point in each game. If the receiver cannot hear the server's announcement of the score, he must ask the server to speak louder.
13. **Towel Breaks, Timeouts, & Coaching Advice** - Each player is allowed only a single one-minute timeout per match. Likewise, the break between games should never exceed one minute. A towel break is permitted after every six points (e.g., 1-5, 3-3, 4-8, 10-2, 9-9, etc). During a towel break or any time out situation the racket must be left on the table. No player may receive advice once a match has started except from a single coach during the break between matches or the allotted one-minute time out. Spectators and team members may not give advice unless designated as the player's coach before the match. Any kind of coaching during play of the match--verbal or otherwise is distracting and rude to your opponent.
14. **Winning Point Celebration** - Many players, including professionals, will shout their winning point with the common sound of "Cho" or "Yeah". While celebration is good, excessive 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.
15. When a **match is over** shake the opponent hands, the umpire(s), and the opponent's coach (as well as your own coach). This is the proper sign of respect.



SAFETY & ETIQUETTE RULES OF TABLE TENNIS

Draft Version 1.0



SAFETY TIPS

Table Tennis is a serious sport with potential for injury when playing a game or a match. The following are a list of safety tips that will help keep you injury free and out on the table.

- A. A proper warm up is necessary before starting play. Warming up involves 5-15 minutes of light physical activity to elevate your heart rate and make your muscles warmer. Then follow up with some gentle stretching to finish the warm up.

- B. When using more than one ball during practice drills, don't leave balls under or near your feet, where you might easily stand and break or trip over them. During multiple ball drills be careful when picking up the balls that are rolling around the court, You should stay clear of the players doing the drills because you might end up getting hit by a racket, or have one of the players tripping over you.

- C. Don't walk onto or through other players' courts until you make eye contact with the players involved. A player with his back to you may not even know you are there, and may suddenly move backwards during a point, causing a collision with the potential to injure both of you.

- D. When playing doubles, keep aware of where your partner is, so that you don't accidentally hit him with your bat, or run into each other without expecting it. Sooner or later you will run into each other, so at least be prepared so that you can soften the impact.

- E. Don't jump over the barriers between courts. You may accidentally catch your foot on the barrier and end up tripping over it or if there is ball on the other side of the barrier, you may just to land on a ball and fall down and hurt yourself.



SAFETY & ETIQUETTE RULES OF TABLE TENNIS

Draft Version 1.0

- F. Don't take your water bottle onto the court because it is very easy to spill water without noticing it. It is also illegal by many professional TT organization standards. When changing ends take a quick look around to see that there are no opponent's sweat all over the floor. Use paper towels or floor towels to clean water spill or sweat from the floor. Please do not use your own towel.

- G. Be careful around tables and make sure that roller tables have their brakes on and that their bracing struts are in proper position. Also, please do not sit or lean on tables. Also most of our tables require two people to set up safely. Always ask a friend to help you in setting up and folding down the tables.

- H. Do not use a cracked blade because you never know when it might finally snap and have the racket head go flying away, possibly endangering others and hitting someone else. Also don't ever throw your racket around or hit the table as a sign of frustration. This is a form of equipment abuse and is not tolerated at our court.

- I. When you are on court, show proper courtesy and good manners at all times. Don't mess around while others are trying to play matches. You may accidentally get hit by the players racket and hurt yourself.

- J. While playing if you experience sharp pain stop for a short break. As we get older due to wear and tear on our bodies, we may turn a small injury into a large one by ignoring our body's warning signs and flare up new pain. So listen to what your body is telling you and play safe and have fun.

Thank You!