

BASIC RULES OF TABLE TENNIS – Short version. (Defined by ITTF in full).



The Table & Net

The upper surface of the table shall be 2.74m long and 1.525m wide, and 76cm above the floor. The top of the net along its whole length shall be 15.25cm (6 inches) above the playing surface.

The Racket & Ball

- The racket can be any size, shape or weight but the blade shall be flat and rigid.
- The surface covering material shall be matt and bright red on one side and black on the other.
- The racket includes the racket hand up to the wrist. So racket fingers are part of racket.
- The ball shall be white or orange with a matt finish and diameter of 40mm.

The Service

Service shall start with the ball resting freely on the open palm of the server's stationary free hand, the ball then can be projected near vertically upwards (without imparting spin) so that it rises at least 16cm after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck.

The Return

The ball, having been served or returned shall be struck so that it passes over or around the net assembly and touches the opponents court, either directly or after touching the net assembly.

A Point

A player shall score a point;

- If their opponent fails to make a correct service or a correct return,
- If the ball touches anything other than the net assembly before being struck by their opponent,
- An opponent obstructs the ball or strikes the ball twice.
- If an opponent or anything they wear or carries moves the playing surface or touches the net assembly,
- If an opponent's free hand touches the playing surface.

Ball hits your fingers.

Legally this is fine as the bat includes your fingers, hand and wrist. However a double hit is not legal. If the ball hits your fingers and the bat (even at the same time) this is a fault. Only the player hitting the ball can really call this.

On the line is in.

In all cases on the line is "in". When serving in doubles a ball hitting the center service line is "in".

Edges (are called in)

A ball can hit an edge from any direction or angle. The edge is the line that defines the side and the top of the table.

A Game/Match

A game is won by a player(s) first scoring 11 points unless both players score 10 points, when the game shall be won by the first player(s) subsequently gaining a 2 point lead. A match is the best of an odd number of games.

The Umpire

In all cases when an umpire is seated for a game the umpire's decision is final.

It is expected that an umpire will issue a warning of illegal activity (by calling a let and replaying a point) before penalizing a player with a loss of a point. (ie illegal serve, bad sportsmanship or what ever).

A "let" for a ball coming into the court area is called only by the umpire. A player raises their hand to signify to the umpire he wants a "let" called, but does not just stop playing. If no-one raises their hand no let should be called.

In doubles (when there is no umpire seated), the players will determine all issues. In all cases, a majority view shall prevail and in cases of 2v2 opinions, then a "let" will be called and the point replayed. The nominated (player) scoring the game is not the umpire.

The complete version of the 'Laws of Table Tennis' is available under the "Governance" section of the TTA website.
<http://www.tabletennis.org.au/>.