



Archive of Past MDTTC Newsletters

Welcome to the 45th issue of the MDTTC News! As usual, there's lots of news to report and new and ongoing programs, and we hope to see you at some of them. As usual a special thanks to MDTTC sponsors [Butterfly](#), [Go Table Tennis](#), and [HW Global Foundation](#). Make sure to read my [daily table tennis blog](#) - I often write about MDTTC happenings there. And if you have a nice picture taken at MDTTC, email it to me and it might make the newsletter! -Editor and Coach [Larry Hodges](#)

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Capital Area Team League – Finals Coming Up, New Season Starting!

The Grand Final is coming up on Feb. 20 at the [Maryland Table Tennis Center](#). For full info, including results and standings, see the [Capital Area Table Tennis League page](#).

The league is for all ages and levels. They are especially looking for more participation from players from 1000 to 2000 level – i.e. the bulk of club level players. The Spring 2016 season starts in April, with an entry deadline of March 1 (which qualifies you for an "early bird" discount of \$200 per team). This past season we had 12 teams and 73 players. Why not join us? We'll help you find a team. You'll get to play in front of cheering teammates! For more info, see the [Capital Area Table Tennis League page](#).

Upcoming MDTTC Tournaments: April 9, June 11, Sept. 10, and Oct. 22

Here's the [MDTTC Tournament Page](#), and here's the [entry form](#) for this year's tournaments.

MDTTC would like to thank Charlene Liu for her many years running MDTTC tournaments. Now that she's running the Washington DC club, she's moved on. So what foolish person agreed to take on the hassle of running these tournaments? Why, that would be Coach Larry Hodges. He's run over 150 USATT sanctioned tournaments, mostly in the 1980s and 1990s, but he also ran the four MDTTC tournaments in 2013. He looks forward to getting pelted with rotten fruit by those who get bad draws.

MDTTC On-Going Group Classes

New classes started up in January, but you can still join in - **SIGN UP TODAY!** They include:

- [Beginners Level 2 Class for All Ages](#)
Tuesdays 6 - 7 pm,
- [Beginner & Advanced Beginner Classes \(Age 6 - 15\)](#)
Sundays 4 - 5:30 pm
Thursdays 6 - 7 pm
- Ongoing Adult Training, Sundays, 6:30-8:00PM. [Here's info.](#)

MDTTC Pro Shop: Club shirts available at only \$20

Club Shirts are available, starting at only \$20 each! Stop by to get all your table tennis needs at the MDTTC Pro Shop. Few know that we're actually one of the largest ones in the country, with sales going up each year.

USA Olympic Trials

The [USA Olympic Trials](#) are Feb. 4-6 in Greensboro, NC. A number of MDTTC players will be competing, with many of the MDTTC coaches there as well. MDTTC players are Derek Nie, Nathan Hsu, Roy Ke, and Toby Kutler. Also competing is Crystal Wang, who developed at MDTTC but last fall moved to Seattle when her mom got a job with Boeing. Other former MDTTC junior stars competing are Peter Li and Jeff Hsin. Some of the MDTTC coaches will also be attending to coach the players.

MDTTC Birthday Parties & Rental Space for Corporate and Private Events

Want to have a table tennis birthday party? [Here's info!](#) MDTTC also offers space rental for special corporate and private events. Here is [Facility Rental Information](#). We are happy to work with you to customize your event. Contact for Wen at Marylandttc@gmail.com or call her directly at 240.257.6868.

MDTTC Web and Facebook Pages

Don't forget to see the regularly updated [MDTTC Facebook page](#), and make sure to "like" it! Stop by and see all the photos, read the latest news, or post your own comments. Also see the [MDTTC web page](#) for regularly updated info.

Tip of the Month: What Is a Good Serve?

By Larry Hodges

Ask ten people, and you might get ten answers. But there is a simple definition: a Good Serve is one that helps you win. Ideally, this would mean a serve that the other guy can't return – but if you can do that, your opponent isn't your level anyway. What you really want is a serve that sets up Your Game.

This means that if your best shot is a loop, then your serve should set up your loop as often as possible. If your best shot is a smash, then that's what your serve should set up. If you are more of a counterdriver, then that's what you want the serve to set up. And so on. On the other hand, what's a good serve for one player might not be a good serve for another. A short backspin serve might set up a looper who wants a push return – but it might not set up a counterdriver, who wants to get into a topspin-countering rally. A fast & deep serve might set up a hitter or counterdriver, but it might take a looper's best shot away. This doesn't mean a player should always serve the same way – but that they should favor the serves that will set them up.

You also have to take the future into account. If you are a blocker, you might win now by serving long over and over and letting your opponent attack so you can block. And while that might not be a bad tactic, strategically you might want to learn to serve and attack, perhaps by serving short, so you can add another aspect to your game. So you might want to develop serves that set you up to play the way you want to win in the future.

So develop lots of Good Serves, which set up your game now, in the future . . . or perhaps ones that just win you points directly from the sheer Goodness of the Serve.

BONUS Tip of the Month: Should You Develop Your Forehand Push? By Larry Hodges

At the lower levels, pushing is often over-used, but at the higher levels, many underestimate their value. All top players have excellent pushes. However, advanced players - and even intermediate players - rarely push against deep backspin to the forehand, unless they are choppers. (And even choppers will often attack them.) It's simply better for them to attack, usually with a loop. (The same can be said on the backhand, if you have a good backhand loop.) So ... should you develop your forehand push?

The answer is yes - but not necessarily against long backspin to the forehand. You need to develop your forehand push mostly against short backspin to the forehand. Against this ball, you can attack, but pushing is often the better bet. You can push short, push quick and long, go for angles, heavy spin, etc. - all sorts of variations. And because you are closer to your opponent, he has less time to react. (At the same time, don't predictably push - learn to flip short balls as well.)

The problem is how do you practice your forehand push? If you push forehand to forehand with a partner, then unless both of you are practicing short pushes, you'll be practicing pushing against long balls. The answer is to develop the forehand push this way with a partner, but once it becomes relatively advanced, start focusing on drills where you start the drill by pushing against a short backspin, and then continue the drill/rally with other shots. You won't get as much repetitive practice this way, but you'll practice what you need to develop. For example, your partner serves short to your forehand; you push quick off the bounce to your partner's backhand; he pushes quick to your backhand; and you loop, either forehand or backhand. (Or, alternately, your partner loops off your forehand push, if it's "his" drill - and you still get practice pushing!)

Meanwhile, a nice drill is to push forehand to forehand (or backhand to backhand) where both players push short - but the first time a player pushes long (by mistake), you loop. This develops your short push, develops your loop, and best of all, it develops your judgment on whether a ball is long or short.