THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS

THE TABLE
The upper surface of the table, known as the playing surface, shall be rectangular, 2.74m long and 1.525m wide, and shall lie in a horizontal plane 76cm above the floor. The playing surface shall not include the vertical sides of the tabletop. The playing surface may be of any material and shall yield a uniform bounce of about 23cm when struck by the tip of the ball after the server has dropped it on to it from a height of 30cm.

The playing surface shall be uniformly dark coloured and matt, but with a white line, 2cm wide, along each 2.74m edge and a white end line, 2cm wide, along each 1.525m edge. The playing surface shall be divided into 2 equal courts by a vertical net running parallel with the end lines, and shall be continuous over the whole area of each court. For doubles, each court shall be divided into 2 equal half-courts by a white centre line, 3mm wide, running parallel with the side lines; the centre line shall be regarded as part of both right half-courts.

THE NET ASSEMBLY
The net assembly shall consist of the net, its suspension and the supporting posts, including the clamps attaching them to the table. The net shall be suspended by a cord attached at each end to an upright post, 15.25cm high, the outside limits of the post being 15.25cm outside the side line. The top of the net, along its whole length, shall be at 15.25cm above the playing surface. The bottom of the net, along its whole length, shall be as close as possible to the playing surface and the ends of the net shall be attached to the supporting posts from top to bottom.

THE BALL
The ball shall be spherical, with a diameter of 40mm. The ball shall weigh 2.7g. The ball shall be made of celluloid or similar plastics material and shall be white or orange, and matt.

THE RACKET
The racket may be of any size, shape or weight but the blade shall be flat and rigid. At least 85% of the blade by thickness shall be of natural wood, an adhesive layer within the blade may be reinforced with fibrous material such as carbon fibre, glass fibre or compressed paper, but shall not be thicker than 7.5% of the total thickness or 0.35mm, whichever is the smaller. A side of the blade used for striking the ball shall be covered with either ordinary pimpled rubber, with pimples having a total area of not less than 2.0cm² nor more than 2.2cm² or sandpaper, with pimples inwards or outwards, having a total thickness including adhesive of not more than 4.0mm. Ordinary pimpled rubber is a single layer of non-cellular rubber, natural or synthetic, with pimples evenly distributed over its surface at a density of not less than 10 per cm² and not more than 30 per cm². Sandwich rubber is a single layer of cellular rubber covered with a single outer layer of ordinary pimpled rubber, the thickness of the pimpled rubber not being more than 2.0mm. The covering material shall extend up to but not beyond the limits of the blade, except that the part nearest the handle and gripped by the fingers may be left uncovered or covered with material not significantly changing the characteristics of the surface. Before the start of a match and whenever he or she changes his or her racket during a match a player shall show his or her opponent and the umpire the racket he or she is about to use and shall allow them to examine it.

DEFINITIONS & TERMINOLOGY
A rally is the period during which the ball is in play. The ball is in play from the last moment at which it is stationary on the palm of the free hand before being intentionally projected in service until the rally is decided as a let or a point. A rally is a rally of which the result is scored. A point is a rally of which the result is scored. The racket hand is the hand carrying the racket. The free hand is the hand not carrying the racket; the free arm is the arm of the free hand. A player strikes the ball if he or she touches it in play with his or her racket, held in the hand, or with his or her racket hand below the wrist. A player obstructs the ball if he or she, or anything he or she wears or carries, touches it in play when it is above or moving towards the playing surface, not having touched his or her court since last being struck by him or her opponent. The server is the player due to strike the ball first in a rally. The receiver is the player due to strike the ball second in a rally. The umpire is the person appointed to control a match. The assistant umpire is the person appointed to assist the umpire with certain decisions. Anything that a player wears or carries includes anything that he or she was wearing or carrying, other than the ball, at the start of the rally. The end line shall be regarded as extending indefinitely in both directions.

THE SERVICE
Service shall start with the ball resting freely on the open palm of the server’s stationary free hand. The server shall project the ball in an upward arc, without imparting spin, so that it rises to at least 61cm above the open palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck. As the ball is falling the server shall strike it so that it touches first his or her court and then, as the ball is falling, touches the opponent’s court, either before being struck by an opponent; if the ball passes over his or her court or beyond his or her end line without touching his or her court, after being struck by an opponent; or if the ball, after being struck by an opponent, passes through the net or between the net and the net post or between the net and playing surface; if an opponent obstructs the ball; if an opponent wears or carries, moves the playing surface; if an opponent’s free hand touches the playing surface; if a doubles opponent strikes the ball out of the sequence established by the first server and first receiver; as provided under the expedite system; if both players or pairs are in a wheelchair due to a physical disability and his or her opponent does not maintain a minimum contact with the seat or cushion(s), with the back of the thigh, with the ball in struck; his or her opponent touches the table with either hand before striking the ball; his or her opponent foot touches the floor during play.

THE ORDER OF SERVING, RECEIVING AND ENDS

A player may decide that a service is incorrect. If either the umpire or the assistant umpire is not sure about the service, the assistant umpire can be satisfied that he or she complies with the requirements of the Laws, and either the umpire or the assistant umpire shall each make a return. The ball, having been served or returned, shall be struck so that it touches the opponent’s court, either before being struck by an opponent; if the ball passes over his or her court or beyond his or her end line without touching his or her court, after being struck by an opponent; or if the ball, after being struck by an opponent, passes through the net or between the net and the net post or between the net and playing surface; if an opponent obstructs the ball; if an opponent wears or carries, moves the playing surface; if an opponent’s free hand touches the playing surface; if a doubles opponent strikes the ball out of the sequence established by the first server and first receiver; as provided under the expedite system; if both players or pairs are in a wheelchair due to a physical disability and his or her opponent does not maintain a minimum contact with the seat or cushion(s), with the back of the thigh, with the ball in struck; his or her opponent touches the table with either hand before striking the ball; his or her opponent foot touches the floor during play.

A game shall be won by the player or pair first scoring 11 points unless both players or pairs score 10 points, when the game shall be won by the first player or pair subsequently gaining a lead of 2 points.

A match shall consist of the best of any odd number of games.

OUT OF ORDER OF SERVING, RECEIVING OR ENDS
If a player serves or receives out of turn, play shall be interrupted by the umpire as soon as the error is discovered and shall resume with the players serving and receiving who should be server and receiver respectively at the score that has been reached, according to the sequence established at the beginning of the match and, in doubles, to the order of serving chosen by the pair having the right to serve first in the game during which the error is discoverd. If the players have not changed ends when they should have done so, play shall be interrupted by the umpire as soon as the error is discovered and shall resume with the players at the ends at which they should be at the score that has been reached, according to the sequence established at the beginning of the match. In any circumstances, all points scored before the discovery of an error shall be reckoned.

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