

EVOLUTION OF THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS AND THE REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS

THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS, AS ADOPTED BY THE ITTF INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING, DECEMBER 1926

Singles

1 The Table: The table shall be in surface rectangular, 9ft in length, 5ft in width; it shall be supported in such a way that its upper surface shall be 2ft 6ins above the floor, and shall lie in a horizontal plane. It shall be made of solid hard 1in wood, or shall yield a uniform bounce of not less than 8ins and not more than 10ins when a standard ball is dropped from a height of 12ins above its surface. The upper surface of the table shall be termed the "playing surface"; it shall be non-reflecting, of a dark colour with a white line 3/4in broad along each edge. The lines at the 5ft edges or ends of the playing surface shall be termed "end lines". The lines at the 9ft edges or sides of the playing surface shall be termed "side lines".

2 The Net and its Supports: The playing surface shall be divided into two courts of equal size by a net running parallel to the end lines and 4ft 6ins from each. The net shall be 6ft in length; its upper part along its whole length shall be 6 3/4ins above the playing surface; its lower part along its whole length shall be close to the playing surface. The net shall be attached at each end to an upright post 6 3/4ins high; the outside limits of each post shall be 6ins outside the side line on the same side.

3 The Ball: The ball shall be spherical. It shall be made of celluloid, pale in colour; it shall not be less than 4 1/2ins nor more than 4 3/4ins in circumference; it shall not be less than 2/27ozs nor more than 2/25ozs in weight.

4 The Racket: The racket may be any material, size, shape or weight.

5 The Scoring of Points: A game shall be won by the player who first wins 21 points, unless both players have won 20 points, when the winner of the game shall be he who first wins two points more than his opponent.

6 The Choice of Ends and Service: The choice of ends and the right to be server or striker-out in every game shall be decided by toss, provided that if the winner of the toss choose the right to be server or striker-out, the other player shall have the choice of ends, and vice versa, and that the winner of the toss may, if he prefer it, require the other player to make the first choice.

7 The Change of Ends and Service: After five points the striker-out shall become the server and the server shall become the striker-out, and so on after every five points until the end of the game or the score 20-all. At the score 20-all the striker-out shall become the server and the server shall become the striker-out, and so on after each point until the end of the game. The player who served first in a game shall be striker-out first in the immediately subsequent game, and so on until the end of the match. The player who started at one end in a game shall start at the other in the immediately subsequent game, and so on until the end of the match. Where the match consists of only one game or, where it consists of more than one game, in the deciding game of the match, the players shall change ends after 10 points, and so on until the end of the game or the score 20-all. At the score 20-all in such a game, the players shall change ends.

8 The Order of Play: The server shall first make a good service, the striker-out shall then make a good return and thereafter server and striker-out shall each alternately make a good return.

9 A Good Service: The service shall be delivered by the server projecting or dropping the ball by hand into the air. The ball shall then be struck so that it touch first the server's court and then, passing directly over or around the net, touch the striker-out's court. At the moment of the impact of the racket on the ball in service, both shall be behind the end line of the server's court and between an imaginary continuation of the side lines.

10 A Good Return: A ball having been served or returned in play shall be struck so that it pass directly over or around the net and touch directly the opponent's court.

11 A Let: The rest is a let (a) if the ball served, in passing over or around the net, touch it or its supports, provided the service is otherwise good; (b) if a service be delivered when the striker-out is not ready, provided always that he may not be deemed to be unready if he attempt to strike the ball; (c) if either player be prevented by an accident, not under his control, from making a good service or a good return; (d) if either player lose the point, as provided in Law 12(c), (d), (e) or Law 13, owing to an accident not within his control.

12 A Point: Either player shall lose a point (a) if he fail to make a good service, except as provided in Law 11; (b) if, a good service or a good return having been made by his opponent, he fail to make a good return, except as provided in Law 11; (c) if he, or his racket, or anything that he wears or carries, touch the net or its supports while the ball is in play; (d) if he, his racket, or anything he wears or carries, move the playing surface while the ball is in play; (e) if his free hand touch the playing surface while the ball is in play.

13 A Point: Either player shall lose a point (a) if before the ball in play shall have passed over the end lines or side lines, not having touched the playing surface on his side of the table since being struck by his opponent, it come into contact with him or anything he wears or carries; (b) if at any time he volley the ball.

14 In Play: The ball is in play from the moment at which it is projected or dropped from the hand in service until (a) it has touched one court twice successively; (b) it has, except in service, touched each court alternately without having been struck by the racket intermediately; (c) it has been struck by either player more than once successively; (d) it has touched either player or anything that he wears or carries, except his racket or his racket hand below the wrist; (e) on the volley it come into contact with the racket or the racket hand below the wrist; (f) it has touched any object other than the net supports, or those referred to above.

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THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS, AS ADOPTED BY THE ITTF INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING, DECEMBER 1926 (cont)		
<p>15 Further Definitions: The period during which the ball is in play shall be termed a “rest”. A rest the result of which is scored shall be termed a “point”. A rest the result of which is not scored shall be termed a “let”. The player who first strikes the ball during a rest shall be termed the “server”. The player who next strikes the ball during a rest shall be termed the “striker-out”. If the ball, in passing over or around the net, touch it or its supports it shall, nevertheless, be considered to have passed directly, except as referred to in Law 11(a). If the ball in play come into contact with the racket or the racket hand, not yet having touched the playing surface on one side of the net since last being struck on the other side, it shall be said to have been “volleyed”. The “racket hand” is the hand carrying the racket; the “free hand” is the hand not carrying the racket.</p>		
<p>Doubles</p>		
<p>16 The above Laws shall apply in the doubles game except as below.</p>		
<p>17 The Table: The surface of the table shall be divided into two parts by a white line 1/2in broad, running parallel to the side lines and distant from each of them 2ft 5in. This line shall be termed the “service line”. The part of the table surface on the nearer side of the net and the right of the service line in respect to the server shall be called the server’s right “half-court”, that on the left in respect to him the server’s left half-court. The part of the table surface on the farther side of the net, and the left of the service line with respect to the server, shall be called the striker-out’s right half-court, that on the right in respect to the server the striker-out’s left half-court.</p>		
<p>18 A Good Service: The service shall be delivered as otherwise provided in Law 9, and so that it touch first the server’s right half-court or the centre line on his side of the table and then, passing directly over or around the net, touch the striker-out’s right half-court or the centre line on his side of the net.</p>		
<p>19 The Choice of Order of Play: The pair who have the right to serve first in any game shall decide which partner shall do so and the opposing pair shall then decide similarly which shall first be striker-out.</p>		
<p>20 The Order of Service: The first five services shall be delivered by the selected partner of the pair who have won the right to do so and shall be received by the selected partner of the receiving pair. The second five services shall be delivered by the striker-out of the first five services and received by the partner of the server of the first five services. The third five services shall be delivered by the partner of the server of the first five services and received by the partner of the striker-out of the first five services. The fourth five services shall be delivered by the partner of the striker-out of the first five services and received by the server of the first five services. The fifth five services shall be delivered as the first five services. And so on, in sequence, until the end of the game or the score 20-all, when the sequence of serving and striking-out shall be uninterrupted, but each player shall serve only one service in turn until the end of the game. In a one-game match, or in the deciding game of a match of more than one game, the pair that served the first five services shall have the right to alter their order of striking-out at the score 10 if that concludes a group of five services or at the conclusion, otherwise, of the group of services soonest concluded thereafter.</p>		
<p>21 The Order of Play: The server shall first make a good service, the striker-out shall then make a good return, the partner of the server shall then make a good return, the partner of the striker-out shall then make a good return, and thereafter each player alternately in that sequence shall make a good return.</p>		
<p>22 Out of Order of Service: If a player serve out of his turn, the player who ought to have served shall serve as soon as the mistake is discovered, unless a group of five services shall have been completed before such discovery, when the service in the subsequent groups shall continue in the same order, as if the sequence had not been discontinuous. In any circumstances, all points scored before the discovery shall be reckoned.</p>		
<p>23 Out of Order of Striking-Out: If a player act as striker-out out of his turn, the player who ought to have been striker-out shall be striker-out as soon as the mistake is discovered, unless a group of five services shall have been completed before the discovery, when the order of striking-out shall continue in the subsequent group of services as if the sequence had not been discontinuous. In any circumstances, all points scored before the discovery shall be reckoned.</p>		
<p>24 Further Amendments and Additions: Law 6: Alter “server”, “striker-out”, “winner”, “he” to their respective plurals; alter “player” to “pair”. Law 11(b): Insert “or his partner” after “striker-out”; “the striker-out” instead of the first “he”. Law 11(c): Insert “any” in place of “either”. Law 11(d): Insert “pair” in place of “player”; “their” in place of “his”. Law 12: Insert “pair” in place of “player”. Law 12(a) Insert “the server” in place of “he”. Law 12(b): Insert “one of their opponents in proper sequence” in place of “his opponent”; “they” in place of “he”. Law 12(c): Insert “either partner” in place of the first “he”. Law 12(d): Insert “either partner” in place of the first “he”. Law 12(e): Insert “of either partner” after “hand” and delete “his”. Law 13: Insert “pair” instead of “player”; “their” in place of the first “his”; “one of their opponents in proper sequence” instead of “his opponent”; “either partner” instead of “him”. Law 14(c): Insert “any” in place of “either”; add “or by any player out of proper sequence except as provided in Law 23”. Law 14(d): Insert “any” in place of “either”. Add Law 14(g): In service it has touched the server’s left half-court or the striker-out’s left half-court.</p>		

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THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS, AS ADOPTED BY THE ITTF INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING, DECEMBER 1926 (cont)		
DRAFT RULES FOR LAWN TENNIS SCORING		
Singles		
1-4 Unaltered		
<p>5 The Scoring of Points: If a player wins his first point, the score is called '15' for that player; on winning his second point, the score is called '30' for that player; on winning his third point, the score is called '40' for that player; and the fourth point won by a player is scored 'game' for that player, except as below:</p> <p>If both players have won three points, the score is called 'deuce' and the next point won by a player is called 'advantage' to that player. If the same player wins the next point, he wins the game; if the other player wins the next point the game is again called 'deuce', and so on until a player wins the two points immediately following the score deuce, when the game is scored to that player.</p> <p>The player who first wins six games wins a set, except as below:</p> <p>If both players have won five games, the score is called 'games all', and the next game won by a player is scored 'advantage game' to that player. If the same player wins the next game, he wins the set; if the other player wins the next game, the score is again called 'games all', and so on until a player wins two games more than his opponent, when the set is scored for that player.</p>		
6 Unaltered		
<p>7 The change of Ends and Service: The server who delivers the first service shall serve throughout the first game. At the end of the first game the striker-out in that game shall become server in the next game and the server striker-out, and so on alternately in all the subsequent games of a match. The player who started at one end in a set shall start at the other end in the immediately subsequent set, and so on until the end of the match. Where the match consists of only one set or, where it consists of more than one set, in the deciding set of the match, the players shall change ends at the end of the first, third and every subsequent alternate game of that set.</p>		
8-15 Unaltered		
Doubles		
16-17 Unaltered		
<p>18 A Good Service: In each game the first, third and every subsequent alternate service of that game shall be delivered as otherwise provided in Law 9 and so that it touch the server's right half-court or the centre line on his side of the net and then, passing directly over or round the net, touch the striker-out's right half-court or the centre line on his side of the net. In each game the second, fourth and every subsequent alternate service of that game shall be delivered similarly, except that its direction shall be from the server's left half-court to the striker-out's left half-court.</p>		
<p>19 The Choice of the Order of Service: The pair who have the right to serve in the first game of each set may decide which partner shall do so, and the opposing pair may decide similarly for the second game. The partner of the player who served in the first game shall serve in the third; the partner of the player who served in the second game shall serve in the fourth, and so on in the same order in all the subsequent games of the set.</p>		
<p>20 The Choice of the Position of Striking-Out: Each pair, before either partner acts as striker-out in a set, may decide which partner shall act as striker-out in receiving right half-court services, and which partner shall act as striker-out in receiving left half-court services, and thereafter the position for receiving the service thus established shall not be changed throughout that set.</p>		
21 Unaltered		
<p>22 Unaltered to the word 'reckoned'. Add thereafter 'if a game shall have been completed before such discovery, then the order of service shall remain unaltered, as if the sequence had not been discontinuous', and delete from 'if to end.</p>		
<p>23 Out of Order of Striking-Out: If a player receive a service in the wrong half-court, he shall return to receiving services in his allotted half-court as soon as the mistake is discovered, but all points scored before such discovery shall be reckoned.</p>		
<p>24 Amendments unaltered throughout, but delete the added law 14g 'in the first, third or subsequent alternate service in a game, it has touched the server's left half-court or the striker-out's left half-court'. And add as law 14h 'in the second, fourth or subsequent alternate service in a game,'it has touched the server's right half-court or the striker-out's right half-court'.</p>		

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YEAR	LAWS	REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS
1927	In doubles, pair serving first in match may change its order of striking-out at score 10 in last possible game. Top edges and corners of table top to be regarded as part of the playing surface.	Championship matches to be the best of 5 games in all events.
1928	Lawn tennis scoring abandoned.	Net must be suspended by cord and not by wire. Players must not wear white or light-coloured clothing, nor use white, light-coloured or reflecting rackets. Umpire's decision is final on any question of fact occurring during a match; referee's decision is final on any question of rule interpretation. Appeal may be made to Tournament Committee on any question not covered by rule.
1929	Service order to change at the score 10 in the deciding game and not at the end of the group of services soonest next concluded.	
1930	In last possible game of a match, ends to be changed at score 10 and not after every 10 points. Volleyed net-cord service results in a point to the server. Good Return law amended to make clear that a ball which spins back over the net may be struck directly on to the correct court. Provisions for Out of Order of Service or Ends added to singles Laws.	Tournament prospectus or entry form must specify ball to be used. Protest is not valid unless made before the next point is played.
1931	The pair serving first in the last possible game of a doubles match may alter their order of striking out or that of their opponents instead of only their own.	
1932	Artificial aids (eg rubber bands) and deformation of ball to enhance finger-spin in service banned.	
1934	Volleyed net-cord service to be a let.	
1935	Playing surface can be made of any material.	
1936	Choice of service and ends to be made only at beginning of match and not at start of every game..	
1937	Metric equivalents of all Imperial dimensions included in Laws.	All forms of finger spin in service banned. Net height reduced to 6 inches. Either player or pair can claim repose period of up to 5 minutes between 3rd and 4th games of 5 game match. Referee can allow temporary suspension of play for incapacity resulting from circumstances outside player's control, such as accidental injury during play. Decision of Tournament Committee or Jury final at tournament or match where they are made, but appeal can be made to Rules Committee for guidance on future decisions. In team events, appeal can be made only by team captain. Agreement between players (in individual event) or team captains (in team event) does not entitle Tournament Committee to modify decision by referee or Jury. Time limit system for controlling pushing play mandatory in World Championships and optional in other competitions.
1938	Reduction of net height and ban on finger-spin and incorporated in Laws. .	
1947	All equipment dimensions to be primarily in metric units. Ball must be white and not brightly reflecting. Racket must not be light-coloured or brightly reflecting. In service, free hand must be open and flat, with fingers together and thumb free, and ball must not be gripped. Ball may be released by free hand moving upward or dropping away.	

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YEAR	LAWS	REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS
1948		Time limit rule to apply to all international competitions, with option of expedite system by agreement of competing Associations. Players can represent Associations only if they have relevant nationality. Procedure for score-calling defined. In team events, advice may be given by team captain during change of ends, in individual events by anyone during repose period after 3rd game. Junior age limit recommended as under 17 on July 1st of previous season. Procedure specified for seeding by ranking and by Association nomination, and for alterations to the draw.
1949	Ball in service must be projected upwards.	
1951	In service the ball must be projected vertically upwards and the free hand, while in contact with ball, must be horizontal.	
1952	Strict observance of service law may be waived where umpire is notified beforehand that full compliance is prevented by physical disability.	Flooring should be hard, non-slippery wood and not stone or linoleum. Net should be of dark green mesh. Playing space and lighting should be as near as possible to standards specified for World Championships.
1954	Ball in service need not be projected vertically.	
1955		Net should be of dark green 7.5-12.5mm mesh, with white top. Timekeeper to announce remaining time at 3, 2 and 1 minutes before limit. Players entitled to 2 minutes' practice before start of match, reduced to 1 minute if all have already played on that table that day.
1956	In service, free hand need not be flat and horizontal, with fingers straight.	Lighting level to be at least 40 foot candles over table and 20 foot candles over rest of playing area.
1959	Racket blade must be of wood and any covering must be either pimples rubber, with pimples out, or sandwich rubber, with pimples in or out. If player serves or receives out of turn, error to be corrected as soon as it is discovered, but all points already scored to stand. Player must serve so that the umpire can see the correctness of the service.	The value of prizes, other than medals or trophies, must not be more than 61.25 Swiss francs and the value of a trophy, other than a permanent trophy, must not exceed 428.75 Swiss francs.
1961		Umpire to announce "2 minutes more" and "1 minute more" as duration of game approaches time limit, without stopping play. Game to be terminated at time limit by abrupt sound, such as a gong.
1963	"Rest" changed to "rally", "service line" to "centre line", "striker-out" to "receiver". Expedite incorporated in Laws.	Play must be continuous throughout a match except for possible repose period between 3rd and 4th games and any emergency suspension of play by the referee. Time limit system for controlling pushing play abolished in favour of expedite system.
1965	Side of racket not used for striking ball and part of striking surface nearest handle and gripped by fingers may be uncovered or covered with any material. In doubles, pair having the right to serve in each game may choose which of them will do so and in first game, opposing pair may choose which of them will receive. In deciding games of doubles match, receiving pair must change order of receiving at score 10 in deciding game. Ball need not be struck within imaginary extension of side lines.	Centre line may be marked permanently on table. Lights must be at least 4m from ground and must provide uniform lighting level of 400 lux. Expedite system to replace time limit system. Players and captains to be discouraged from mannerisms or behaviour that might unfairly affect an opponent.

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YEAR	LAWS	REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS
1967	Limits set for bounce of ball on table. If both sides of racket are covered, colours must be similar. At start of service, free hand must be stationary and above level of playing surface; ball must be projected near vertically upwards and not struck until it is descending. If player serves so that umpire cannot be sure that his service is correct, umpire may warn him without awarding a point, but any subsequent service of doubtful legality will result in award of point to receiver. Match may consist of 1 game or best of 3 or 5 games. Expedite system and 5 minute repose period after 3rd game incorporated in Laws.	End line and side line judges may be appointed. Expedite procedure defined; strokes to be counted by separate official. Eligibility determined by birth or 2 years' residence. Ball must be of a brand and type approved by the ITTF. Referee may, at his discretion replace an umpire or other match official during a match, but any valid decision made by that official cannot be changed. Detailed procedure given for seeding by ranking and by Association nomination. Players must not be required to play more than 7 matches in a day nor more than 3 in session of 4 hours without their consent. Prize limit for open competitions to be 75 Swiss francs.
1969	In service, ball must be projected upwards within 45° of vertical; free hand must be open and flat and, while in contact with the ball, above the level of the playing surface. Rally is a let if interrupted to correct an error in order of serving.	Prizes limit for open competitions raised to 1,250 Swiss francs. Emergency suspension for accidental injury must not exceed 5 minutes.
1971	Ball may be white or yellow.	Entry form must state colour of ball to be used. Extent of seeding by ranking increased. Players must not engage in doping to enhance performance.
1973	Any player can claim 5 minute interval after 3rd game and 1 minute between any other consecutive games. Racket covering must extend over whole of striking surface but not beyond it.	Betting on players or matches forbidden. Clothing must be of uniform dark colour apart from trimming on collar and sleeves. Umpire may allow brief breaks for towelling and refreshment, provided the continuity of play is not unduly disturbed. Players may not receive advice during towelling breaks. During a match, players must remain within 3m of the playing area. Refere may disqualify a player for persistent unfair or offensive behaviour.
1975	Singles and doubles Laws integrated. Measurements shown in metric units only. Ball may be returned under the projection of the net outside the table. Centre line may be permanently marked on table. Any trimming round edge of racket blade must not be white, yellow or brightly reflecting.	Table, net and ball must be of types approved by the ITTF. Track suits must not be worn in play except with permission of referee. Player's name may be shown on back of shirt. Provision for partial re-draw in case of absence of several seeds.
1977	Player must allow umpire to inspect both sides of racket before it is first used.	Clothing must be of uniform colour other than white. Duties and powers of timekeeper, stroke counter, edge ball judge, end line judges and net-cord judges defined. Detailed anti-doping regulations introduced.
1979	Racket blade may include reinforcing layers of fibrous material, up to 15% of total thickness. Player must allow opponent as well as umpire to inspect racket before it is first used. "Anything a player wears or carries" to include anything worn or carried at start of rally. Umpire may declare let if conditions of play are disturbed in way which could affect outcome of rally. Umpire may give warning for any doubt about correctness of service, whether or not this is due to his view being obscured.	Service judge may be appointed, to sit opposite umpire and to decide on legality of service when umpire's view is obstructed.
1981	"Obstruction" defined; obstructed net-cord service to be a let. Umpire cannot warn for doubtful service if assistant umpire has been appointed. If players have not changed ends when required to do so they must change as soon as the error is discovered.	Racket covering must be of type authorised by the ITTF. Umpire may use hand signals to indicate decisions. Anyone giving advice illegally may be sent away from playing area. Functions of timekeeper, stroke counter, edge ball judge and service judge combined as "assistant umpire". Qualifiers must be separated in the draw in accordance with rules for seeding by Association. Adviser may be sent away from playing area for giving advice during play.

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1980		Procedure defined for seeding doubles pairs consisting of players from different Associations and for resolving group competitions. Practice period to be up to 2 minutes in all circumstances.
1983	Free hand and racket must be above level of playing surface from start of service until ball is struck. Ball must be struck not farther from table than rearmost part of server's body, other than arm or leg. Point is scored by opponent if player stamps foot when serving. Matches must consist of best of 3 or 5 games. Ball must not be struck with uncovered side of racket blade. Player must allow opponent and umpire to examine racket before match and whenever it is changed during match. The racket blade and any layer within it must be continuous and of even thickness.	Two surfaces of racket must be of clearly different colours. Clothing must be mainly of a uniform colour other than white, except for collars, sleeves and trimming along side seams. Referee may not rule illegal clothing which has been authorised by the ITTF. Floor must not be light-coloured or brightly reflecting. Function of end line judge eliminated.
1984		For seeding by Association, men's and women's doubles pairs regarded as pair of Association to which higher ranked player belongs; mixed doubles pairs regarded as pair of male player's Association. Qualifiers to be distributed as evenly as possible among sections of the draw.
1985		Surface of racket blade must be red one side and black on the other. Background colour of clothing may include narrow stripes in contrasting colour other than white. If players cannot agree on choice of a ball, umpire will take one at random and players must accept it. Player who fails to notify umpire and opponent of change of racket is liable to warning and disqualification.
1986		Players may be allowed to practise on match table during an emergency suspension of play.
1987	In service, ball must be projected near vertically upwards so that it rises at least 16cm. Interval between any successive games can be up to 2 minutes.	Advertisements allowed on players' clothing. Opposing players and pairs must wear clothing of clearly different colours.
1988		Either umpire or assistant umpire may decide on net-cord service or disturbance to conditions of play. Clothing may include any colours other than that of the ball in use.
1989	Free hand, while in contact with ball in service, must be behind server's end line. Ball in service must be projected "near vertically". Umpire may interrupt play to warn or penalise a player for misbehaviour.	Players of a team, and players from the same Association forming a doubles pair, must be dressed uniformly. Point penalty system introduced for control of misbehaviour.
1990		Clothing may be of any colour except that the main colour must be different from that of the ball in use. Light intensity over playing surface must be at least 1,000 lux. Period of qualifying residence for eligibility increased to 6 years.
1991	In service the ball, but not necessarily whole of the free hand, must be behind the server's end line. Umpire may warn for doubtful service whether or not an assistant umpire has been appointed. Foot-stamping in service will not automatically incur the award of a point. Expedite not to come into operation if both players or pairs have scored at least 19 points.	Emergency suspension of play for injury must not exceed 10 minutes. Yellow and red cards recommended for use by match officials to indicate warning and disqualification for misbehaviour. "Match point" system introduced for determining results of group competitions.

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1992		Players in senior individual events may not receive advice during a match. Players under 16 may acquire eligibility without qualifying period of residence.
1993	Ball may be white, yellow or orange. Surface of racket blade must be bright red on one side and black on the other. No point scored if player volleys the ball. Net clamp defined as part of net assembly and not of playing surface.	One or two assistant umpires may be appointed. In individual events, advice may be given only by one person, designated before match. In penalty point system, 2 points may be awarded for second offence and any further offence must be reported to referee. Display of yellow and red cards for warnings and penalty points compulsory. Number of seeds must not exceed number of entries in 1st round of knock-out. Six years' residential period for qualification may be reduced by agreement between Associations.
1994		Advertisements allowed on floor of playing area. Players must leave rackets on table between games. Warning for misbehaviour applies to both players of a doubles pair, whichever commits the offence. Score may be called in any language acceptable to the players and the umpire.
1995	Wording of Laws revised so that points are "scored", not "lost". Ball passing over end line without touching playing surface on that side of net automatically goes out of play. Winner of the toss cannot ask other player to make first choice.	Racket coverings may be attached only by pressure-sensitive adhesive sheets or adhesives authorised by the ITTF; players using non-approved adhesives to be disqualified. Area of advertising allowed on players' clothing increased. Score may be called in English or any other language acceptable to players and umpire. Penalty point system extended to allow transfer of warnings and penalties to later matches of a team match. Residential period for player who has not represented an Association reduced to 3 years.
1996		Lighting level must be the same for all tables in the same playing area. Players must choose balls outside playing area; if they do not do so they must use a ball taken at random. In individual events, advice may be given only by one person, designated before the match.
1997	Ball must be white or orange. Player scores a point if the ball passes over his end line with touching his court since last being struck by opponent. Restriction on colour of racket trimming removed. Expedite law modified to make clear that it cannot come into operation in any circumstances of both players or pairs have scored at least 19 points.	Playing space to be not less than 5m high. Area of advertising allowed on players' clothing increased. Players may not choose balls in playing area; if none are chosen before a match, players must use one taken at random by the umpire. Play must be suspended immediately if anyone in playing area is bleeding and must not be resumed until all traces of blood have been removed. Eligibility to be determined in future only by nationality, but players having acquired eligibility under former regulations may retain it. Players may not represent different Associations within a period of 3 years.
1998		Players cannot receive advice between end of practice period and start of match. Player may continue to represent an Association of which he is not a national if he validly represented that Association before 1 September 2004.

EVOLUTION OF THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS AND THE REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS

YEAR	LAWS	REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS
1999	Warning to doubles player for doubtful service applies to pair. If a game lasts for 15 minutes, whether or not expedite had been introduced, all subsequent games to be played under expedite system. Laws no longer specify players' rights to intervals.	Either player or pair may claim a "time-out" of up to 1 minute during a match. Advertisements allowed on floor of playing area. Warning or penalty incurred by either player of a doubles pair applies to both during that individual match, but only to the non-offending player in later individual matches of same team match. Doping tests may be conducted at any international competition. Properly ventilated gluing area must be provided. Either the assistant umpire or a separate official may act as stroke counter for expedite.
2000	Ball diameter increased from 38mm to 40mm. Player does not obstruct ball by intercepting it when it is moving away from playing surface.	Advertising allowed on net. Racket cannot be changed during match unless it is accidentally damaged so badly that it is unusable; player changing racket without notification to be reported to referee.
2001	Game won by first player or pair to score 11 points, or to lead by 2 points after both players or pairs have scored 10 points. Server to change after every 2 points, and players or pairs to change ends when first one player or pair scores 5 points in last possible game. In doubles, pair due to receive next must change order when one player or pair has scored 5 points. Expedite not to come into operation if both players or pairs have scored at least 9 points but to apply for all subsequent games after a completed game has lasted 10 minutes. Match can consist of the best of any odd number of games.	Intervals between games reduced to 1 minute; brief pauses for towelling allowed after every 6 points. At change of service, umpire must point to, but need not name, the new server. Final decision on whether to take time-out to be made by player or pair in individual event and by captain in team event.
2002	Requirement for flat hand in service eliminated. In service, racket need not be above level of playing surface and ball may be struck anywhere behind server's end line provided it is not hidden from opponent. Umpire may warn player for doubtful service only if there is no assistant umpire. Expedite not to come into operation automatically at the start of a game unless it was introduced in the previous game, however, long that game lasted.	Players under the jurisdiction of the referee from the time at which they arrive at the playing venue until they leave it, and under the jurisdiction of the umpire from the time at which they arrive at the playing area until they leave it. Area of advertising allowed on players clothing increased.
2003	As soon as the ball has been projected in service, the server's free arm must be removed from the space between the server's body and the net. Umpire may warn player for doubtful service, whether or not there is an assistant umpire.	
2004		Players of the same Association forming a doubles pair may wear clothing from different manufacturers provided the basic colours are the same.
2005	As soon as the ball has been projected in service, the server's free arm must be removed from the space between the ball and the net. A player scores a point if the ball passes over his court without touching the playing surface since last being struck by his opponent. Amendments for wheelchair play incorporated in Laws.	Regulations on "good presentation" introduced. Doubles pair with players from 2 Associations may be seeded as pair of both Associations.
2006		During a time-out, the umpire will hold up a white card with the arm nearer to the player or pair requesting the time-out.

EVOLUTION OF THE LAWS OF TABLE TENNIS AND THE REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS

YEAR	LAWS	REGULATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS
2007		ITTF authorisation of racket glues is withdrawn and, from 1 January 2008 for junior events and from 1 September 2008 for all other events, glues containing volatile organic solvents will be totally banned. During a time-out, the umpire will first hold up a white card and then place it, or another suitable marker, on the court of the player or pair requesting the time-out.
2008	The racket covering must be used without any physical, chemical or other treatment which would change its characteristics.	The name of the supplier, the brand name, the ITTF logo and the ITTF number of a racket covering must be clearly visible near the edge of the striking surface. In a best-of-5 game team match, no player may compete in more than 2 individual matches. ("Olympic system")
2009	Either the umpire or the assistant umpire can warn a player for a service of doubtful legality.	All players in international competitions to be subject to in-competition dope-testing. If in a group competition a player is disqualified after a match for any reason, the opposing player shall be deemed the winner of an unplayed match.
2010	No point is scored for an accidental "double hit". The expedite system cannot be introduced in a game if at least 18 points have been scored.	In a team match, advice can be given only by a person authorised to be present at the playing area; the umpire is responsible for ensuring that only those authorised are present. In a team match, the name of the team captain must be designated beforehand to the umpire.