

MDTTC News

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Welcome to the first issue of the MDTTC News! I know, I know, what a boring name for a newsletter, and I did consider calling it something like the MDTTC Loop, but that's been used all over. If you have a suggestion for a name, [send it to me](#). This will be a monthly newsletter, generally coming out a few days before the end of each month, covering general MDTTC news and events. So let's get on with it!

As many of you know, MDTTC was recently expanded and renovated. Changes include:

- Doubling in size from about 5000 square feet to 10,000.
- The entire playing area is now covered in the red flooring.
- The bathroom in the middle was taken out and replaced by two larger and nicer bathrooms on the side, including a shower.
- The pro shop and office has doubled in size.
- We have wireless!!! Ask the management for password.

We look forward to seeing you at the *new* MDTTC.

Don't forget to enter the **MDTTC Butterfly Open** on May 5-6, 2012. See the [MDTTC Tournament page](#) or the online [entry Form](#). Over \$2600 Cash Prizes!

Content in this issue:

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And a special thanks to MDTTC sponsors [Butterfly](#), [Go Table Tennis](#), and [James Wu/Llewellyn realtor](#).

-Editor and Coach Larry Hodges

New Programs

- **Adult Beginning Class.** We're starting an Adult Beginning Class (minimum age 14 or permission of instructor). It'll meet on ten Thursdays, 7:30-9:00 PM, May 10 - July 12. Class will be taught by Coach Larry Hodges. Cost is \$200/student, or \$175 for MDTTC members. For more info or to reserve your spot (\$50 deposit required), [email Coach Larry Hodges](#). (Class may be limited to first 20.) [Here's the flyer](#).

- **Beginning Junior Class.** This is for beginning juniors ages 6-13, and are held Sat 10:30AM-Noon and Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM. See the [Junior Group Training page](#).
- **Service Seminar.** Coach Larry Hodges will run a service seminar on Saturday, May 12, from 12:30-2:00 PM. Seminar will alternate between lectures and table practice, covering different serve motions, creating spin, deception, and fast serves. Cost is \$20, \$25 for non-MDTTC members. If there is interest, this will become ongoing weekly 30-minute service practice session on Saturdays, 12:30-1:00 PM. For more info [email Coach Larry Hodges](#).
- **Tuesday Night League.** This started just a few weeks ago. See the [Tuesday and Friday Leagues page](#).
- **Intermediate/Advanced training sessions.** We're considering starting regular training sessions, roughly for players from 1200-2000. If interested [email Coach Larry Hodges](#).

Ongoing Programs

- **Private Coaching,** by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Jeffrey Zeng Xun, or Larry Hodges. See [Private Coaching page](#).
- **Group Sessions.** While this is primarily for juniors, all ages are welcome - it's about 1/3 adults. They meet on Sat & Sun, 4:30-6:30. The first 30 minutes is practice/warm-up, then 90 minutes of matches. See the [Junior Group Training page](#).
- **Summer Camps.** This year there will be continuous camps all summer long, Mon-Fri each week, June 18 - Aug. 24, eleven camps in all. See the [Training Camps page](#).
- **Leagues.** MDTTC runs four different leagues. Take your pick! They are the [Tuesday and Friday Leagues](#) (for all ages and levels); the [Corporate League](#); and the [Elite League](#).
- **Tournaments.** Our next tournament is May 5-6. See the [Tournament page](#).

ITTF Coaching Seminar

Larry Hodges will be teaching another ITTF Coaching seminar either in July or August. If interested, [email him](#). Here's the [ITTF article](#) about the one held last year. The seminars are 24 hours long (six hours/day for four days), and graduates become ITTF and USATT certified coaches. (There are other requirements, such as 30 hours of actual coaching - you can do much of this helping out in MDTTC camps or classes.) Last year it was run on two consecutive weekends. Let Larry know if that would work for you, or if you'd prefer four consecutive days, Mon-Thur. (He's now leaning toward the latter - but can enough people get off from work? [Let him know](#).)

Coconut Cup Team Championships

Congrats to winning team "How Do You Love Me Now?" (Raghu Nadmichettu, George & Derek Nie, and Roy Ke) and runner-up "ABC" (named for the team members Alex Chong, Barbara Wei, and Crystal Wang)! [Here are pictures](#) taken by James Mu.

MDTTC Open House

Saturday, April 7, 2012

By Alan Lang

[\(Pictures from the Open House](#) by Chaoying Gong.)

On April 7, 2012, the Maryland Table Tennis Center (mdttc.com) hosted an Open house to commemorate its recent renovation and expansion. Over two hundred players and table tennis enthusiasts attended. They were given free merchandise, along with more valuable prizes that were raffled off. They were also given free entry into a three-point tournament (single

elimination, all games to three points). Table tennis demonstrations featured several top players, including nationally decorated player Han Xiao (men's singles finalist and men's doubles champion at the 2011 Nationals), MDTTC Coach Jeffrey Zeng Xun (last year's Eastern Open and Cary Cup Open champion), and USATT certified national coach and Hall of Famer Larry Hodges. The demos also included the club's rising juniors, including Derek Nie, already participating at an international level at age 11 (and a finalist at the USA Nationals last year in 10 and under); U.S. Junior Olympic Under 16 Boys' Champion Nathan Hsu; USA Cadet (under 15) National Team Member Tong Tong Gong; and Crystal Wang, who last year achieved the highest rating of any under 10 player in U.S. history, boys or girls. Larry also gave a 30-minute seminar on serving with spin and deception, and he and John Hsu ran a 90-minute junior program for beginning juniors.

The Open House took place in the newly refurbished complex, which boasts several notable improvements. Most visibly, the club's size has doubled to accommodate its rising activity. This has allowed for more and larger playing courts and larger spectator areas. Despite these augmentations, occupancy still seems to be a problem due to the center's rising popularity. "Even though we expanded, it's still crowded," notes long-time member George Nie, who won the three-point tournament. Other improvements include the relocation and expansion of the club store, higher quality restrooms and shower facilities, and the implementation of Wi-Fi Internet. Furthermore, a special red flooring, the "red carpet," which offers improved traction and cushioning for players, has been expanded to cover the entire playing area.

With these enhancements, co-proprietor and USATT certified national coach Jack Huang hopes to create an environment that is both welcoming and conducive to serious play, intended especially for the club's burgeoning junior population. As evidenced by those present at the festivities, the club still caters to a diverse population, including members from a wide array of ethnicities, age groups, and skill levels. Player Mohamed Youns describes this diversity as contributing to a "very enjoyable environment," citing the pleasure that can be derived from competing against a variety of other players in a low stress setting. All said, the renovations come as a welcome rejuvenation of a table tennis center that furnishes precocious children and world-class table tennis players alike.

Tip of the Month: Where to Place Your Spin Serves

By Larry Hodges

(Tips are taken from TableTennisCoaching.com, where you can see other [tips](#) and Larry's [daily table tennis blog](#), which often covers MDTTC activities.)

While you should vary your spin serves to all parts of the table - at least until you find out what gives your opponent trouble and what doesn't - there are certain spin serves that are generally more effective when done to specific parts of the table.

The main principle to remember is that, in general, opponents will have more trouble returning a serve that spins away from them than one that spins into them. For example, when a righty serves a forehand pendulum serve to another righty (so that the ball breaks to the server's right, the receiver's left), if the ball is served to the wide backhand, the ball spins away from the receiver, and is usually harder to receive than the same serve to the forehand, where it breaks into the receiver. Similarly, a backhand or tomahawk serve to the forehand is generally more difficult to receive than one to the backhand, since it also breaks away from the receiver (to the server's left, the receiver's right). There are three reasons for this.

First, a receiver has to move or reach for a serve that breaks away. This makes it trickier to control as he may be hitting on the move, making it harder to control.

Second, while the receiver may set up with his racket at the right height to receive the serve, when the ball breaks away and he moves or reaches for it there is a tendency to lower the racket. This means he will likely lift the ball too much, and either go off the end or receive soft and high.

Third, to counter the incoming spin the receiver has to aim to the left to receive a ball breaking away on the backhand side, and to the right to receive a ball breaking away on the forehand side. In both cases it's more natural to aim the other way, especially on the forehand side. So countering a sidespin that breaks away is usually more awkward.

Here's a simple way of visualizing this third reason. Imagine a forehand pendulum serve short to your forehand. To counteract the spin, you have to aim to the left, i.e. a normal crosscourt forehand, which is not difficult for most players. In fact, if you wanted to place this ball crosscourt you would want to aim to the left of the table, which isn't that difficult with a little practice. Now imagine a backhand or tomahawk serve short to your forehand side, so the ball is breaking away from you. To counteract the spin, you have to aim to the right, down the line - see how awkward that can be? If you wanted to take it down the line, you'd have to aim to the right of the table, even more awkward. Even advanced players often have trouble with this.

There are always exceptions. Some players are good against balls that break away, and are awful against ones that break into them. Or perhaps you simply are better at one type of sidespin serve, and the opponent will have trouble with it on both sides (especially if you vary the placement), while having little trouble when you use your other, less effective sidespin serve. So experiment - but do so with the knowledge that sidespin serves are usually more effective when placed properly. (And if you haven't yet developed these spin serves, there's no time like now to start learning them!)