

# Glossary

**American grip**—See **Seemiller grip**.

**antispin**—An inverted rubber sheet that's very slick, so spin doesn't take on it. It usually has a dead sponge underneath. It's mostly used for defensive shots. Also known as *anti*.

**backhand**—A shot done with the racket to the left of the left elbow for a right-hander, the reverse for a left-hander.

**backspin**—A type of spin used mostly on defensive shots. When you chop the ball, you produce backspin. The bottom of the ball will move away from you. This is also called **chop** or **underspin**.

**blade**—The racket, usually without covering.

**block**—A quick, off the bounce return of an aggressive drive done by holding the racket in the ball's path.

**blocker**—A style of play where blocking is the primary shot.

**chop**—A defensive return of a drive with backspin, usually done from well away from the table (see **backspin**).

**chop block**—A block where the racket is chopped down at contact to create backspin.

**chopper**—A style of play where chopping is the primary shot.

**closed racket**—Racket position in which the hitting surface is aimed downward, with the top edge leaning away from you.

**counterdrive**—A drive made against a drive. Some players specialize in counterdriving.

**counterloop**—To loop a loop (see **loop**).

**countersmash**—To smash a smash (see **smash**).

**crosscourt**—A ball that is hit diagonally from corner to corner.

**crossover**—A style of footwork for covering the wide forehand.

**dead**—A ball with no spin.

**deep**—1. A ball that bounces on the opponent's side of the table very close to the endline. 2. A serve or push that would not bounce twice on the opponent's side of the table (if given the chance).

**default**—Being disqualified from a match for any reason.

**double bounce**—A ball that hits the same side of the table twice. The person on that side loses the point.

**down the line**—A ball that is hit along one side of the table, parallel to the sidelines.

**drop shot**—Putting the ball so short that the opponent has trouble reaching it. Done when the opponent is away from the table.

**expedite rule**—If a game has continued for 15 minutes without the game ending, the expedite rule takes effect.

A point is awarded to the receiver who returns 13 consecutive shots after expedite has been called. Players alternate serves after expedite has been called.

**flat**—A ball that has no spin, usually traveling fast. The ball hits the racket straight on, at a perpendicular angle.

**flip**—An aggressive topspin return of a ball that lands near the net (a short ball).

**footwork**—How a person moves to make a shot.

**forehand**—Any shot done with the racket to the right of the elbow for a right-hander, to the left for a left-hander.

**free hand**—The hand not holding the racket.

**handicap events**—A tournament event where points are spotted to make the match even.

**hard rubber**—A type of racket covering with pips-out rubber but no sponge underneath. It was the most common covering for many years until the development of sponge rubber but is now rarely used.

**high toss serve**—A serve where the ball is thrown high into the air. This increases both spin and deception.

**hitter**—A style of play where hitting is the primary shot.

**inverted sponge**—The most common racket covering. It consists of a sheet of pimped rubber on top of a layer of sponge. The pips point inward, toward the sponge, so the surface is smooth. This is the opposite of pips-out sponge, where the pips point outward, away from the sponge.

**ITTF**—International Table Tennis Federation. The governing body for world table tennis.

**junk player**—A player who uses an unusual racket covering, usually long pips or antispin.

**kill shot**—See **smash**.

**let**—If play is interrupted for any reason during a rally, a let is called and the point does not count. See "The Rules" in the "Table Tennis Today" section.

**let serve**—The most common type of let when a serve nicks the net. As with other lets, the serve is taken over again.

**loaded**—A ball with a great deal of spin.

**lob**—A high defensive return of a smash. Usually done with topspin or sidespin.

**long**—See **deep**.

**long pips**—A type of pips-out rubber where the pips are long and thin and bend on contact with the ball. It returns the ball with whatever spin was on it at contact and is very difficult to play against if you aren't used to it.

**loop**—A heavy topspin shot, usually considered the most important shot in the game. Many players either specialize in looping or in handling the loop.

**looper**—A style of play where the primary shot is the loop.

**match**—A two out of three or three out of five games contest.

**open racket**—Racket position in which the hitting surface is aimed upward, with the top edge leaning toward you.

**penholder**—A type of grip used mostly by Asians. It gives the best possible forehand but the most awkward backhand of the conventional grips.

**pips**—The small conical bits of rubber that cover a sheet of table tennis rubber.

**pips-out**—A type of racket covering. It consists of a sheet of pips-out rubber on top of a layer of sponge. The pips point outward, the opposite of inverted.

**playing surface**—The top of the table, including the edges.

**push**—A backspin return of backspin. Usually defensive.

**put-away shot**—*See smash.*

**racket**—What you hit the ball with. The blade plus covering.

**racket hand**—The hand that holds the racket.

**rally**—The hitting of the ball back and forth, commencing with the serve and ending when a point is won.

**rating**—A number that is assigned to all tournament players after their first tournament. The better the player, the higher the rating. The range is from about 200 to about 2900.

**rating events**—A tournament event that requires players to be rated under a specified amount.

**receive**—The return of a serve.

**rubber**—The racket covering. Sometimes refers only to the rubber on top of a sponge base.

**rubber cleaner**—Used to keep the surface of inverted rubber clean.

**sandwich rubber**—A sponge base covered by a sheet of rubber with pips that point either in or out. If pointed in, it is inverted sponge. If pointed out, it is pips-out sponge.

**Seemiller grip**—A grip that is often used in the United States, named after five-time U.S. National Champion Dan Seemiller, who developed it. Many coaches consider it an inferior grip and, outside the U.S. it is almost unheard of. Also known as the American grip.

**serve**—The first shot, done by the server. It begins with the ball being tossed from the palm of the hand and struck by the racket.

**shakehands grip**—The most popular grip. It gives the best balance of forehand and backhand.

**short**—A ball that would bounce twice on the opponent's side of the table if given the chance.

**sidespin**—A type of spin most effective on serves. When you use sidespin, the ball spins like a record on a record player.

**smash**—Ball is hit with enough speed so opponent cannot make a return. Also called a kill shot or a put-away shot.

**smother kill**—To smash right off the bounce. Usually done against a lob.

**speed glue**—A type of glue that can be put under a sheet of table tennis sponge to make it faster and spinnier.

**spin**—The rotation of the ball.

**sponge**—The bouncy rubber material used in sandwich covering under a sheet of rubber with pips. It revolutionized the game and ended the hard rubber age in the 1950s.

**stroke**—Any shot used in the game, including the serve.

**topspin**—A type of spin used on most aggressive shots, with an extreme amount being used in the loop shot. When you topspin the ball, the top of the ball moves away from you.

**two-step footwork**—The most popular style of footwork where the player starts with a short step with the foot on the side he or she is moving to. Then, the other foot follows as both feet move together.

**umpire**—The official who keeps score and enforces rules during a match.

**underspin**—*See backspin.*

**USATT**—USA Table Tennis. The governing body for table tennis in the United States.

**volley**—To hit the ball before it bounces on your side of the table, which results in an immediate loss of the point for you.