

MDTTC Newsletter

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That's Daniel Sofer smashing cups at his table tennis birthday party at MDTTC on Sunday, Sept. 28.

Archive of Past MDTTC Newsletters

Welcome to the 29th 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 [James Wu/Llewellyn Realtor](#). 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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MDTTC October Open

Sign up now for the October 18-19 MDTTC Open. Events are Under 13, U1150, U1400, U1650, U1900, U2050, U2250, U2400, and the Open. As usual Charlene Liu will run the tournament, Paul Kovac the referee. Special thanks goes to sponsors Butterfly and Llewellyn Realtor (James Wu). [Here's the info flyer](#) - hope to see you there!

Crystal Wang Wins Under 18 Girls at North American Championships

[Here's the ITTF article](#) on the event, held Aug. 31-Sept. 1, in Mississauga, Canada. Here's the [ITTF page](#) for the event, which includes results, articles, pictures, and video.

Nathan Hsu in China

Nathan's been training in China the last three months, along with Coach Jeffrey. As of this writing he's put together eleven vlogs, which are video blogs on his trip. The first one is titled "[China Day 4](#)." The others are linked on the right.

Dana Huang Wedding

On Sept. 6, Dana Huang, daughter of Coach Jack Huang (and a former MDTTC junior star) got married to Charles Song. Here's a [wedding photo](#)! About a hundred people attended the reception, including dozens of table tennis people.

ITTF Interview with Coach Larry Hodges

On Sept. 4 the International Table Tennis Federation did a [feature interview](#) with Coach Larry.

Ongoing Programs

- **Beginning Junior Classes.** The new sessions began Sept. 11 and 14. This is for beginners to advanced beginners, ages 6-14, with Coach Larry (with John Hsu and others assisting), and are held Thursdays 6-7PM, Saturdays 10:30AM-Noon, and Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM. [Here's the info flyer for Sat & Sun](#). The Thursday session is organized by the Montgomery Country Recreation Department; here is the [info and signup page](#). Enter Course #387796 for the Fall II Session that begins on October 30th, 2014.
- **Afterschool Program.** The MDTTC Afterschool program continues this Fall. The program combines table tennis and schoolwork, with courtesy pickups at schools or houses. MDTTC coaches and staff will pick up students after school (from selected areas), and bring them to the club where they will have a one-hour table tennis session, practice time, and do homework with our resident tutors. The academic tutors are Larry Hodges and Wen Hsu. [Here's the info flyer](#).
- **Group Sessions.** While this is primarily for juniors, all ages are welcome - it's about 1/3 adults. They meet on Saturdays, 4:30-6:30. The first 30 minutes is practice/warm-up, then 90 minutes of matches. See the [Group Training page](#).

- **Private Coaching**, by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Larry Hodges, Jeffrey Zeng Xun, Wang Qing Liang, Alex Ruichao Chen, Bowen Chen, John Hsu, and Raghu Nadmichettu. See [Private Coaching page](#).
- **Leagues**. MDTTC runs three different leagues. Take your pick! They are the [Tuesday and Friday Leagues](#) (for all ages and levels), and the [Elite League](#). The Friday league is pretty much jammed, so we're hoping to get more in the Tuesday league.

MDTTC Birthday Parties

Want to have a table tennis birthday party? [Here's info](#)! We've had five since December. Parties include one hour of coaching and games led by an MDTTC coach, usually Coach Larry.

MDTTC Club Shirts with 3 great styles. To personalize with your name costs only \$7.99 extra. To order, please drop by MDTTC to make your selection.

Kiru shirts \$20, original \$34.99)



Pelluci (\$24.99, original \$49.99)



Passo (\$29.99, original \$49.99).



Rental Space for Corporate and Private Events

MDTTC offers space rental for special corporate and private events. Here is [Facility Rental Information](#), and here is info on [Birthday Party Packages](#).

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.

Ma Long's Backhand

[Here's a blog entry](#) about the backhand of China's Ma Long, and 12 things we can learn from it.

TIP OF THE MONTH: The Purpose of the Serve

By Larry Hodges

The serve is one of the most misunderstood techniques in table tennis. Many players serve just to get the ball in play, or to keep the opponent from attacking, or to try to score winners with every serve. So what is the purpose of the serve?

The primary purpose of the serve is to set up your attack. Unless the receiver does something to stop your attack, you should be serve and attack essentially every time you serve. This doesn't mean your first attack has to be a winner, but it should be aggressive.

In the modern game, attacking usually means looping, either forehand or backhand. Most favor the usually more powerful forehand, but others loop from either side, depending on where the receive is, and some may favor the backhand loop. Others use the serve to set up their smash, either with a serve and smash, or a serve to set up a loop, and the loop to set up the smash. (This is rare at the higher levels, where looping completely dominates, but is still common at the intermediate level.)

This doesn't mean you don't sometimes serve for winners. In fact, players who do not have any "trick" serves that are designed to trick an opponent into an easy miss are lacking in their service game. (Trick serves usually only work a few times, however.) Most serves should be to set up the attack. Even if the serve is a trick serve where you hope the opponent will miss the serve outright, you should assume it's coming back, and be ready for the follow-up, which should be an attack unless the opponent does something to stop it. If anything, you should be so expecting your "trick" serves to come back that when an opponent misses it, you are surprised as you were so waiting to follow up with an attack.

Even defensive players should use the serve to set up an attack, even if it's an occasional one. For example, the defensive player may serve and look for a specific return (or just a generally weak one), and if he gets it, attack. If he doesn't, then he may go back on defense.

Some players may use the serve to set up their best rallying shot. For example, a blocker might serve long, and then quick-block the next ball. Or a counter-hitter might serve short topspin, which brings the receiver in over the table while starting a topspin rally, and then the server can get right into aggressive counter-hitting, with the receiver perhaps jammed to the table and so unable to start the rally off well.

Once you get into the mindset that the purpose of the serve is to set up your attack, then you can begin to gain experience on which serves set up which returns, and how and where to best to attack them. Once you have this serve and attack mind-set, you'll soon be dominating the points on your serve. We'll finish with an acronym that I just made up and that's a bit dated for the pre-looping years (when hitting dominated), but always remember to "Serve and Make A Strong Hit" - SMASH!