

MDTTC News



MDTTC Players at the Butterfly Cary Cup, March 20-22.

L-R: Changqing Xu, Jian Lin, Jeffrey Zeng, Lisa Lin, Yinghua Zhang, Bowen Chen, Barbara Wei, Crystal Wang, Ruichao Alex Chen, Nathan Hsu, Derek Nie, Gunjun Nie, Justin Sun, Quandou Wang, Han Xiao, Wen Hsu, Hans Hsu. (Missing: Ryan Dabbs, George Li, Joshua Tran, Al Senter.)

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[Archive of Past MDTTC Newsletters](#)

Welcome to the 35th 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](#) and [Go Table Tennis](#). 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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Spring Break Camp

Our popular Spring Break camp will be held on April 6-10. Please register now to reserve your spot. It is for all ages and levels, but will likely be mostly junior players, as the camp coincides with Spring Break. Camp is 10AM - 6PM each day, Mon-Fri, with a two-hour lunch break. You can drop off kids at 8:30AM. Chinese food can be ordered in the morning for \$6 to be delivered for lunch.

Thursday & Sunday Junior Group Classes This is for beginners to intermediate level players, ages 6-14, with Coach Larry, John Hsu and others assisting, and are held Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM, and Thursdays from 6-7PM. Come to MDTTC to register for the ongoing Sunday group classes. The next Thursday session begins April 16. Here's the group picture from the Thursday junior class:



Tuesday Lunch Break Group Classes (1 - 2 pm)

This class is intended for players who would like to improve their table tennis skills while getting great physical and mental exercises. All levels are welcome. Ball Robots will be used as a part of this year round program.

Fees: \$100 / student for 10 lesson pass - MDTTC members

\$125 / student for 10 lesson pass - non-members

Drop ins: \$15 each time; availability limited & not guaranteed. Members receive priority.

New Club Shirts with 3 great styles. 40 - 50% off!

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

[Plasafe Shirt](#) (regular \$ 53 MDTTC special price: \$25)



[Chox Cotton Shirt](#) (regular \$43; MDTTC special price: \$25)



[Dive T-Shirt](#) (regular \$35; MDTTC special price: \$20)



Butterfly MDTTC March Open

MDTTC held a tournament on March 14, run by Charlene Liu. Here are [complete results](#). Below are the main results - click on the names for the pictures!

Open Singles - Final: [Ruichao Alex Chen d. Khaleel Asgarali](#), 7,3,6,8; **SF:** Chen d.

Nathan Hsu, 4,6,8,3; Asgarali d. Stefano Ratti, -7,9,8,7,-8,6.

Under 2300 - Final: [Khaleel Asgarali d. Stefano Ratti](#), 9,9,-9,9.

Under 2000 - Final: [Eric Li d. Michael Clarke](#), 5,4,-3,3.

Under 1700 - Final: [Kyrlo Tsygura d. Patrick Sun](#), 7,9,6.

Under 1300 - Final: [Siliang Huang d. Jeff Howes](#), 9,-3,8,11.

Over 50 - Final: [Nazruddin Asgarali d. Lixin Lang](#), 4,13,11.

Under 16 - Final: [Derek Nie d. Klaus Wood](#), -5,-4,5,8,9.

MDTTC Dominated at 2015 Butterfly Cary Cup

A large group of MDTTC players traveled down to Cary, NC, for the annual Cary Cup tournament - see picture at top. [Here's an article](#) by Barbara Wei on the MDTTC players!

Capital Area Super League

The historic first match took place on Thursday, March 19, at the Maryland Table Tennis Center, between the MDTTC Smokeoutz (Khaleel Asgarali, Toby Kutler, Ryan Dabbs, Amy Lu, with Chen Bowen and Reza Ghiasi sitting out), and the MDTTC Lions (Stefano Ratti, Raghu Nadmichettu, Heather Wang, and Ernie Byles). Normally it's supposed to be three on three, but due to a misunderstanding and a last-minute negotiation, they played four on each side this one time. The Smokeoutz won 5-4, with a severely under-rated 11-year-old [Ryan Dabbs](#) (rated 2018, #5 in U.S. in Under 12 boys) pulling out a ninth match upset win over Ernie Byles.

[Here's the write-up](#) by Stefano Ratti, along with results and pictures. (Click on the pictures for larger version.) And yes, that's a [lion smoking a cigar and dreaming about table tennis](#).

While both of these teams are MDTTC teams playing at MDTTC, the league itself has [72 players on 13 teams](#) from six clubs. This is only the first season. The goal is to 1) grow each season by expanding into the recreational player base, and 2) create a

proto-type regional league that can spread to anywhere in the country. Great thanks goes to Michael Levene and Stefano Ratti for taking much of the initiative in developing this league, with John Olsen and I the other members of the organizational committee. Much of it is based on Michael's experiences in the English leagues and Stefano's in the Italian leagues; how tennis, bowling, and other sports developed and run their leagues; and successful U.S. leagues, in particular the [LA League](#), from whose web page we shamelessly stole anything useful.

Adult Beginning/Intermediate Class (Beginners to 1500 level)

There are 19 players in the class, taught by Larry Hodges, with Raghu Nadmichettu and Josh Tran assisting. The class has now met for five Sundays out of the ten scheduled. Here's a class picture:



MDTTC [Birthday Parties](#)

Here's one (right) from Ryan Lee's eighth birthday party on March 26. Interested in a table tennis birthday party? [Here's more info!](#)

[Private Coaching](#) available by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Larry Hodges, Jeffrey Zeng, Wang Qing Liang, Bowen Chen, John Hsu, and Raghu Nadmichettu

[MDTTC 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.

[Media Coverage](#)

Here's the latest.

- **USA Today:** [American Crystal Wang Turning Heads in Table Tennis at age 13](#)

- **ESPN:** [How a 13-Year-Old Girl Became a Smashing Success in Table Tennis](#)
- **USATT:** [Interview with Nathan Hsu](#)
- **Washington Post:** They have a Kids Post Special scheduled for April featuring Crystal Wang and Derek Nie.
- **Sinovision TV:** They taped a special on Crystal Wang, which should be coming out soon.

TIP OF THE MONTH:

To Play the Middle and Wide Corners You Have to Practice to Them

By Larry Hodges

One of the most basic concepts in sports is that you must practice what you want to do in a match. The corollary to this is that what you do in practice is what you'll tend to do in a match. And yet, when it comes to ball placement, these are two of the most forgotten concepts in table tennis.

It's a basic tactical principle that most of your shots should go either to a wide angle - often outside the corners, to force your opponent to move and cover more ground - or at the opponent's middle, which is usually his playing elbow, the midpoint between his forehand and backhand, where he has to make a quick decision on whether to play a forehand or backhand, and then move into position. (There are also short balls, but that's a separate issue.) And so it's somewhat obvious that you'd want to practice putting balls to wide angles and to the middle, right? And yet, watch most practice drills, and you'll see that in the overwhelming majority of drills, players play to the corners, but no wider, and almost never to the middle. And so they are 1) not practicing what they want to do in a match, and 2) since what they do in practice is what they'll tend to do in a match, guess what they'll tend to do in a match?

So perhaps add two types of drills to your practice regimen. First, instead of drills where (for example) one player loops and other blocks, and it's all corner-to-corner, do this same drill, except both players go as wide as they comfortably can. The looper should try looping the ball *outside* the corner, often with hooking sidespin to go even wider. The blocker should take the ball quick off the bounce, which gives him the widest angle into the looper's forehand, and so he should block the ball as wide as possible. This doesn't mean going for risky extremes; it means going as wide as you *comfortably* can go. If you go too wide, you get less and less table, and will lose consistency.

You can do many similar drills. For example, when going backhand to backhand in a drill, why not focus on hitting balls a little bit outside the corners? There is an obvious advantage to going right at the corners, since it gives you more table and so it's safer, so you should find the right balance of when to go to the corner, and when to go for more angle.

Second, do drills where you go to the middle over and over. The most basic way is one player attacks the other's middle, while the other blocks from the middle, either forehand or backhand. The blocker can do this drill either by blocking with just forehand or just backhand over and over, or he can move back into a neutral position after each shot,

and then react to the next shot with forehand or backhand. The result of such a drill? The attacker gets in the habit of attacking the middle, and so is able to do so in matches. The blocker practices something he will often see in matches - attacks to his middle - but rarely practices against, and so is rarely prepared for. And so both players improve their middle play.

So try out these drills, or come up with your own that allow you to practice placing the ball at wide angles and to the middle, perhaps by matching patterns you see in matches. And then do in matches what you do in practice!

BONUS TIP OF THE MONTH:

Shadow Practice When You Miss

By Larry Hodges

Table tennis is a game of technique, timing, and adjustment. When you miss a shot, that means something went wrong with your technique or timing. That means something went wrong with your muscle memory, which includes both the technique and timing. So what should you do to get back and reinforce that muscle memory?

You shadow practice the shot. Immediately after missing, before whatever went wrong has a chance to become part of your muscle memory, do it the *right* way. Imagine the same incoming ball you just missed against, including its speed, spin, and location. Then shadow practice the shot the way you should have done it, and visualize the ball doing what it was supposed to do, i.e. the perfect shot. This is how you reinforce the correct muscle memory. Put the feel of the miss out of your memory; thinking about it only reinforces in your muscle memory something you don't want reinforced.

This is especially important for beginning and intermediate players, whose muscle memory is not as developed, but advanced players should do this as well to re-enforce the proper muscle memory. Ultimately, this is the goal of the constant practice needed to become a top player - the primary purpose is to develop and reinforce those muscle memories so they'll remember to come out when needed in a match.