

# WHEELCHAIR AND AMBULATORY SPORTS, USA



## TABLE TENNIS RULES

### American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association

**WHEELCHAIR AND AMBULATORY SPORTS, USA**

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The American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association (AWTTA), founded in 1986, is the Sport Technical body for standing and wheelchair table tennis. It is affiliated with Wheelchair and Ambulatory Sports, USA (WASUSA), USA Table Tennis (USATT). AWTTA coordinates table tennis activities on regional, national, and international levels. Table tennis has been a Paralympic sports since 1960 and is included in the World and Parapanamerican Table Tennis Championships.

Table Tennis competitions are sanctioned by the WASUSA and are conducted in accordance with the rules of the International Table Tennis Federation-Para-Table Tennis division (ITTF-PTT) and along with the exceptions published herein. These laws conform substantially to the ITTF-PTT Laws and Regulations for International Competition. Minor modifications applicable to WASUSA competition are included.

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## 1. WHEELCHAIR PLAY

Wheelchair table tennis shall be played according to the 2.6 rules and regulations of the ITTF/USATT with the following exceptions.

### 1.1 THE SERVICE RULE

#### 1.1.1 SINGLES PLAY

1.1.1.1 The rally shall be a let

1.1.1.1.1 if in service the ball leaves the table by either of the receiver's side lines (on one or more bounces) or

1.1.1.1.2 if in service the ball, after bouncing on the receiver's side returns in the direction of the net

1.1.1.1.3 if in service the ball comes to the rest on the receiver's side of the playing surface.

1.1.1.2 If the receiver strikes the ball before it crosses a sideline or takes a second bounce on his or her side of the playing surface, the service shall be considered good and no let shall be called.

1.1.1.3 If the umpire believes that the server is deliberately serving fast let services before serving correct, this should be interpreted as gamesmanship and the ITTF's Penalty point system shall be used (ITTF/USATT regulation 3.5.2)

1.1.1.4 A good serve shall be in accordance with ITTF/USATT Law 2.6.1 which states in part "Service shall start with ball resting freely on the open palm of the server's stationary free hand.

The server shall then project the ball vertically upwards, without imparting spin, so that it rises at least 16 cm after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck."

1.1.1.5 The umpire may relax the requirements for a good serve if he or she is satisfied that compliance is prevented by physical disability. This will always be done for Class I and 2 players.

1.1.1.6 The player's classification card contains a section indicating any physical limitations that the player may have affecting compliance with the requirements of a legal service.

### 1.2 DOUBLES PLAY (ITTF/USATT Rule 2.8.1)

1.2.1 The server shall first make a good serve as in **1.1** above, and the receiver shall make a good return; and thereafter, either player of a pair may return the ball.

1.2.2 A player's wheelchair shall not protrude beyond an imaginary extension of the centerline of the table. If it does, the umpire shall award a point to the opposing pair.

### 1.3 TOUCHING PLAYING SURFACE WITH FREE OR RACKET HAND (ITTF Rule 2.10.1.10)

1.3.1 During play, a player may touch the playing surface with the Racket hand only to restore balance **after** striking the ball (provided the playing surface is not moved.)

The playing surface shall not be used as a support with the free hand **while** playing the ball.

#### **1.4 WHEELCHAIRS**

- 1.4.1 The footrests or the feet touching the floor during play shall result in the loss of a point.
- 1.4.2 In team and class singles events, no part of the body above the knees may be attached to the chair as this could improve balance. Below knees strapping is allowed. Should a player require some strapping or binding for medical reasons, this should be noted on his/her classification card and will be taken into account when assessing the player's class. In open events, strapping and other aids will be allowed.

#### **1.5 PLAYING AREAS (ITTF Rule 3.2.3.1)**

- 1.5.1 For wheelchair play, the area may be reduced, but should not be less than 8 meters long and 7 meters wide and must be enclosed by dark surrounds.

#### **1.6 THE TABLE (ITTF Rule 2.1)**

- 1.6.1 Tables shall allow access to wheelchairs without obstructing player's legs and shall allow access to two wheelchairs for doubles matches. There shall be no cross bars and table legs should be at least 40cm from base of table.

#### **1.7 RACKET COLOR RULE (ITTF/USATT Rule 2.4.6)**

- 1.7.1 At any regional qualifying meet, the rubber on both sides of the racket may be the same color if all characteristics are identical (such as brand, type, thickness, condition, etc.). Otherwise, it must be covered with bright red and black rubber on opposite sides.

#### **1.8 COMPETITION WITHIN CLASS**

- 1.8.1 Players qualify for National Championships by playing in any competition sanctioned by the WASUSA/USATT in advance of the Championships.
- 1.8.2 In Regional and National class singles events, all players must compete in their assigned class. However, Classes may be combined by the tournament director if he or she determines that there are not enough players to make an event.

### **2. STANDING PLAY**

- 2.1 There are no exceptions to the rules of table tennis for standing players with a disability. All ITTF/USATT rules apply without modification. See section 4.3 for standing classification.

- 2.2 Competitions for standing disabled athletes are organized by the WASUSA, USATT and several disabled sports organizations (DSO's). Contact the WASUSA for more information.

### 3. CONDUCT OF NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

- 3.1 The Tournament Referee is responsible for the seeding, draws, and scheduling of all events within the overall table tennis schedule set up by the Local Organizing Committee.

- 3.2 In the National and Junior National Championships there shall be the following events: Class singles, open singles, and open doubles. In each of these there shall be separate male and female divisions by class and age group.

Junior players may compete in all events at the National Championships if there is not a conflict.

- 3.3 **Mixed Doubles.** It is recommended that there be mixed doubles competition in the National Championships if scheduling permits and there are no conflicts.

- 3.4 **Qualifying Standards.** To qualify for National Championships, wheelchair athletes must have competed in a wheelchair sanctioned tournament or a USATT Wheelchair event, or a USATT sanctioned able-bodied event subsequent to January first of the same year.

Note: If compliance with these standards are not feasible, please contact: Jennifer Johnson, WASUSA-STC 914-937-3932 or E-mail: [johnsonjennifer@yahoo.com](mailto:johnsonjennifer@yahoo.com)

**Junior Qualifying Standards.** All junior athletes should compete in a sanctioned regional meet in their class and/or age group in a table tennis event conducted under the Laws of Table Tennis. All athletes must demonstrate that they are capable of performing a serve and return under Section 1.1. Junior athletes have from August 1 until the National Junior Disability Championships (NJDC) registration deadline to meet the qualifying standards.

### 4. CLASSIFICATION

- 4.1 All physically disabled table tennis players, adult and junior, are divided into ten (10) classes using a functional system. This system **must** be used for all disabled sanctioned tournaments. A general description of each class is given below. For all national competitions, athletes must be examined and officially classified by **certified** Table Tennis Classifier. For more information and/or a list of current certified classifiers contact the WASUSA National office or:

Sharon Frant Brooks  
30 Payne Road  
Lebanon, NJ 08833  
Email: sfrantbrooks@gmail.com

#### 4.2 CLASSES 1-5: WHEELCHAIR

- Class 1: Quadriplegia with less than a Fair muscle grade triceps in the triceps of the playing arm, limitations in the wrist and hand of the playing arm, generally requiring assistance with grasp onto the racket. May need strapping to the racket. No sitting balance.
- Class 2: Quadriplegia, with no sitting balance but with full elbow extension against gravity. May also continue to need strapping to the racket, but will have more wrist Dorsiflexion with resulting tenodesis.
- Class 3: Paraplegia with no true trunk balance or rotation, with player remaining against back of wheelchair unless pulled forward with the non-racket arm.
- Class 4: Paraplegia with limited trunk balance and rotation. Can sit forward of the wheelchair back, but is unable to lift trunk from the lap without significant lordosis. Limited pelvic and hip control, with no apparent hip compensation for lateral trunk movement.
- Class 5: Paraplegia with full pelvic control and good to normal sitting balance. May have compensatory hip and lower limb movements with lateral movements. Is able to lift a table tennis ball from the floor without assistance.
- Minimal disability requirements: Player is unable to be on his/her feet without the use of two canes or crutches, or has such a significant loss of balance and mobility to be able to play effectively on his feet. Players would have to satisfy the classification panel that they would be seriously disadvantaged if they were to play standing.

### 4.3 CLASSES 6-10: STANDING

- Class 6: Players with combined disability in upper and lower limbs. There must be poor or very restricted balance, limited or no lateral movements, unable to run or hop. They may use one crutch or cane. Triple amputees are in this category if the playing arm. CP spastic diplegia or quadriplegia may be in this class.
- Class 7: Players with a combined disability in their playing arm and lower limbs. There should be significant limitations in limitation in mobility including inability to run or jump effectively, move laterally effectively. CP: Severe hemiplegia and incoordination associated with neurological deficit. Hip disarticulation amputees and above knee/below knee lower limb combined amputations are in this class.
- Class 8: Players with severe disability in their leg/legs. Limited ability to run, hop, or jump or to move laterally. Balance is poor. An above knee amputee and a bilateral below knee amputation is in this class, CP: Moderate hemiplegia or diplegia.
- Class 9: Players with a disability in their leg/legs. Able to run with fair ability, but with limitations in lateral and forward/backwards movement. Balance is Fair to good. Difficulty hopping on one foot. Below knee amputation of one lower limb. CP: Mild hemiplegia.
- Class 10: Players with a disability in their non-playing arm. Players with multiple disability sites, with each one on its own is insufficient to classify that athlete, but when combined meet the minimal disability requirement

shall play in class 10.

- Minimal disability for standing classes:

A player has minimal disability if he/she is -30p for two or more limbs, but not minimal disability for any class, he/she will be placed in a class 10. Upper limb amputation must be greater than 2/3 of the forearm. Lower limb amputations must be one ankle disarticulation or bilateral transmetatarsal amputation.

These descriptions are intended only as reference and assistance, and are not intended to replace the full classification guidelines.

## **5. JUNIOR COMPETITION**

**5.1** Juniors shall be assigned to age divisions as follows:

### **Age Groups**

Age Groups \* (2010 change in wording) Competitors will be assigned to age divisions based upon the athlete's age in the competition year (year of birth as of 12/31) in accordance with the following:

Futures through 6 years

A=under 11 (7, 8, 9, 10) will be displayed U11

B=under 14 (11,12,13) will be displayed U14

C=under 17 (14, 15,16) will be displayed U17

D=under 20 (17, 18,19) will be displayed U20

E=under 23 (20, 21, 22) will be displayed U23

See section 4 for junior classification.

**5.2** The FUTURES DIVISION will allow for younger athletes to be introduced to wheelchair sports and develop at their own rate. The Futures Division will be able to compete up to and including regional competitions, but not at Nationals. A Futures Division athlete can choose to compete in the "A" age division at Nationals but must compete and qualify in the appropriate class and "A" age division.

**5.3** The color of the rubber on both sides of the racket may be the same if all other characteristics are identical (brand, type, thickness, condition, etc.). Otherwise, opposite sides must be covered with very markedly contrasting colors. Examples of unacceptable combinations are: any two dark colors, black and any dark color, any two shades of the same color, blue and green of the same level of darkness.

**5.4** A novice open singles division will be contested at the WASUSA National Junior Disability Championships (NJDC) for athletes who have not qualified at a regional event. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners of the NJDC's novice open division will be allowed to compete in the open division of the same years NJDC but would advance to the lowest seed. All ITTF/USATT service rules apply.

## 6. OTHER MATTERS

- 6.1 Any matter not covered by these regulations shall be referred to the Tournament Referee for decision.

## 7. GUIDELINES

The following are guidelines for the conduct of wheelchair and standing disabled table tennis tournaments which are implied by the Rules of Play and, therefore, need not be repeated as rules. They should, however, be adhered to accordingly.

- 7.1 Cushions the height or maximum two cushions is limited to 15cm in playing conditions with no other addition to the wheelchair

- 7.2 Players may tape or otherwise secure the racket to the hand.

- 7.3 A match shall normally consist of the best of three games. However, a match may consist of one game or the best of five games at the discretion of the Tournament Director .

- 7.4 Results of all matches in organized disabled tournaments must be reported to WASUSA within two weeks of the conclusion of the tournament. They must include all game and point scores. Send results to:

Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports, USA  
1236 Jungermann Road, Suite A  
St. Peters, MO 63376  
Phone: 636-614-6784  
Fax: 636-246-0110  
Web: [www.wasusa.org](http://www.wasusa.org)  
Email: [director@wasusa.org](mailto:director@wasusa.org)

- 7.5 **Seeding.** Seeding of draws at regional and national championships should be based on the latest WASUSA result list. All listed players are to be seeded. Unlisted players may be seeded or placed in accordance with the tournament director's knowledge of the player's skill level, or randomly, or both. Modification of seedings arrived at as described above is permitted if approved by the Tournament Director.

A current player list, to be used for seeding, will be sent to tournament directors of sanctioned tournaments upon request.

- 7.6 **The Draw.** Either single elimination, double elimination, or round robin formats may be used to conduct a wheelchair competition at the discretion of the tournament director. Exception: if only three players are entered in an event, they shall play a round robin to determine the order of finish.

- 7.7 The single elimination system results in the loser of each match being eliminated from

the event and the winner advancing to the next round. The only losers who are not eliminated are the semi-finalists. These players will play each other to determine third and fourth places.

**7.8** All byes must occur in the first round of play. If there is one bye, it shall be given to the first seed and additional byes shall be assigned in order of seeding.

**7.9** Umpires. All umpires must be certified through the USATT.

**7.10 Sanctioning of Tournaments.** All tournaments, which intend to qualify disabled table tennis players for National or National Junior Disability Championships, must be sanctioned by the WASUSA and have a designated Sanctioning Agent document that the tournament was conducted under the conditions and rules stipulated by WASUSA. To receive a form and assigned a Sanctioning Agent, the organizing committee should contact WASUSA.

## APPENDIX I

ITTF Rules are available at [www.ittf.org/rules](http://www.ittf.org/rules)

USATT Rules are available at [www.usatt.org/rules](http://www.usatt.org/rules)

USA TABLE TENNIS (USATT)  
One Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5769  
719-866-4583

ITTF-PPT Rules are available at [www.ipttc.org](http://www.ipttc.org)

**AWTTA/WASUSA - Table Tennis Sports Technical Committee**

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