

AMERICAN WHEELCHAIR TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION

American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association**2009 RULES**

The American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association, founded in 1986, is the Sport Technical body for wheelchair table tennis. It is affiliated with Wheelchair Sports, USA and USA Table Tennis and 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 Championships and Pan-American Games for the Disabled.

Table Tennis competitions sanctioned by the American Wheelchair Table Tennis Association (AWTTA) and Wheelchair Sports, USA (WSUSA) are conducted in accordance with the rules of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) and the International Table Tennis Committee for the Disabled (ITTC) along with the exceptions published herein.

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1. WHEELCHAIR PLAY

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

1.1 THE SERVICE RULE

1.1.1 A service in **SINGLES** shall be as in ITTF Rule 2.6 except that a let shall be called if in service the ball:

- (a) leaves the table by either of the receiver's side lines (on one or more bounces) or
- (b) on bouncing on the receiver's side returns in the direction of the net or
- (c) comes to the rest on the receiver's side of the playing surface.

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

1.1.2 In **DOUBLES** play (ITTF Rule 2.6.3), service shall be as in the above exception for singles play, but the ball may leave the table by the side line of the receiver's right half-court.

1.1.3 Exception: Class 1 and 2 players are not required to project the ball upward from the palm of the free hand (ITTF Rule 2.6.7). Players in these classes may hold the ball and project it upward in any manner. Regardless of the method, no spin may be imparted to the ball and the ball must rise at least 16 cm (6 inches) from the hand. Responsibility still rests with the server to serve so that the legality of the serve can be checked by the umpire.

1.2 DOUBLES PLAY (ITTF Rule 2.8.2)

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 HAND (ITTF Rule 2.11.1.8)

1.3.1 During play, a player may touch the playing surface with the free 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.

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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.

1.7 RACKET COLOR RULE (ITTF 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 AWTTA in advance of the Championships.

1.8.2 In Regional and National class singles events, all players must compete in their assigned class.

2. STANDING PLAY

2.1 There are no exceptions to the playing rules of table tennis for disabled standing players. All ITTF rules apply without modification. See section 4.3 for standing classification.

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

3. CONDUCT OF NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

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- 3.1** The National Tournament Committee of the AWTTA is responsible for the seeding, draws, and scheduling of all events within the overall table tennis schedule set up by the National Games 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.

Junior players may compete in all events at the National Championships.

- 3.3** Mixed Doubles. It is recommended that there be mixed doubles competition in the National Championships.

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

Note: If compliance with these standards is not feasible, please contact: Jennifer Johnson, AWTTA President 914-937-3932 for consideration of a waiver. E-mail: johnsonjennifer@yahoo.com

- 3.5** Junior Qualifying Standards. All junior athletes may use the previous year's NJWC participation as a qualifying event for the following years NJWC. Junior athletes have from August 1 until the National Junior Championships 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 AWTTA sanctioned tournaments. A general description of each class is given below. For all national competitions, athletes must be examined and officially classified by an **ATTA certified** Table Tennis Classifier. For more information and/or a list of current ATTA certified classifiers contact:

Sharon Frant Brooks
30 Payne Road
Lebanon, NJ 08833

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. No sitting balance.

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- 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 of the non-playing hand.
- 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.

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- 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:

Futures	6 & under (local and regional only)
A	7- 9
B	10-12
C	13-15
D	16-18
E	19-21

All ages as of January 1st.

See section 4 for junior classification.

- 5.2** For Futures and divisions A and B only: in service the ball must bounce once on the server's side and then only **one** time on the receiver's side before crossing the end line of the table on the receiver's side.

If the ball bounces more than once, a let shall be called.

If the ball is struck before bouncing a second time, it is in play.

For divisions C and D all ITTF and AWTTA service rules apply.

- 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 WSUSA National Junior Championships for athletes who have not qualified at a regional event. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd 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.

6. OTHER MATTERS

- 6.1** Any matter not covered by these regulations shall be referred to the Tournament Referee for decision. He shall refer the matter to the AWTTA Board of Directors for discussion at its next meeting.

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7. GUIDELINES

The following are guidelines for the conduct of wheelchair 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** There are no restrictions on size, number, or shape of cushions.
- 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 Committee.
- 7.4** Results of all matches in organized wheelchair tournaments must be reported to the Committee within two weeks of the conclusion of the tournament. They must include all game and point scores. Send results to:
Jennifer Johnson
23 Parker Street
Port Chester, NY 10573
914-937-3932
- 7.5** Seeding. Seeding of draws at regional and national championships should be based on the latest AWTTA result list. All listed players are to be seeded. Inlisted 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 Committee.
- A current AWTTA 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.

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7.10 Sanctioning of Tournaments. All tournaments, which intend to qualify wheelchair table tennis players for National or Junior National Championships, must be sanctioned by the AWTTA and have a designated Sanctioning Agent document that the tournament was conducted under the conditions and rules stipulated by the AWTTA.

In order to receive such sanction and to be assigned a Sanctioning Agent, the tournament organizing committee should contact the Sanctioning Chairperson of the AWTTA:

Jennifer E. Johnson
23 Parker Street
Port Chester, NY 10573
914-937-3932

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APPENDIX I

ITTF Rulebooks are available from:

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

ITTC Rules are available from:

AMERICAN WHEELCHAIR TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION
30 Payne Road
Lebanon, NJ 08833

APPENDIX II

USA Table Tennis
Disabled Players Committee

Co- Chairpersons -

Sharon Frant Brooks
30 Payne Road
Lebanon, NY 08833
908-735-4780 fax: 908-735-6638

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WHEELCHAIR SPORTS, USA
Table Tennis Sports Technical Committee

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