



# Running a College Table Tennis Club ... Best Practices

## 1 Recruitment ... how to attract members

- **Activities fairs:** most schools hold student activities fairs once or twice a year; make sure your club is there, you'll meet hundreds of potential club members.
- **Post flyers around campus:** include website, contact information, and where you play.
- **Get involved in freshman orientation activities:** reach new students early, before they join another club.
- **Send email blasts to other student groups:** cross promote to groups with similar/shared interests.
- **Reach out to the international student community:** remember, table tennis is more popular abroad than in the US.
- **Hold an exhibition:** generate interest by showing off your skills.

## 2 Marketing and Communications ... how to tell people what you're up to

- **Create and maintain a club website:** if you don't have one, get one (many schools have free hosting for club sports/student activities, if not, hosting is cheap these days). Once you have one, keep it up to date (two-year old information isn't very useful).
- **Create Facebook group for your club:** more than 90% of college students use Facebook, so this is a great way to communicate with them.
- **Manage a club email list:** update it frequently (every few months as people join and leave). Shoot for a list of 20-50 core club members (that pay dues and regularly participate) and 200-500 more people that have shown an interest (signed up at an activities fair, random people you meet, etc.).
- **Communicate regularly with club members:** if they haven't heard from you in over a month, they'll assume the club is dead. Make communications frequent, yet meaningful (don't overwhelm them with pointless stuff).

## 3 Facility management ... how to get a place to play

- **Identify facilities:** different on-campus facilities are often under different jurisdiction (athletic department, club/recreational sports, student union, etc.), check with school administrators to see who manages what.
- **Decide how often to meet:** 2 to 3 times a week is ideal for most clubs. Serious team members may want to practice on their own more often, but it's tough to get 20 or 30 people to show up regularly more than a few times a week.
- **Reserve practice/meeting times:** often done at the start of the semester, but specific procedures vary from school to school (find out how it works at your school, and then don't miss the reservation deadlines).

- **Be persistent to get the best facilities:** administrators may be reluctant to give you the best facilities when you're just starting out, but show club growth and be persistent they'll let you have a better place to play.

#### 4 Club management ... how to keep people coming back

- **Organize club practices:** the key word is "organize," a little structure makes club meetings better. Anyone can knock the ball around on their own; people joined your club for something more.
- **Provide club equipment:** most beginners don't have their own paddles so have some loaners ready; balls break so keep a good supply. The best clubs purchase their own nets and tables (usually better quality than what the school will buy).
- **Find a faculty advisor:** a faculty advisor can give guidance and advice, assist with university administrative issues, and help keep the club going even after you graduate.
- **Find a club coach:** you want your team to get better right? Then you need a coach, simple as that.
- **Hold club officer meetings:** meet with all the club officers (VP, treasurer, etc.) for at least an hour at least once a week (in addition to club practices). Use this time to organize club activities, discuss fundraising, plan team practices, and delegate tasks (you can't do everything yourself).
- **Plan for competitions:** hold tryouts, form a team, and compete in the NCTTA League. Lots of other competition opportunities exist too: ACUI (college singles/doubles), USATT-sanctioned tournaments, you can also hold scrimmages against other schools, and intramural tournaments.

#### 5 Club finances ... how to pay for all this

- **Collect club membership dues:** semester or yearly dues is usually the easiest to manage. Membership dues induce a commitment from club members, makes them more dedicated (they want to get their money's worth). Membership dues force you to provide a club experience worth paying for (if you can't do that, why have a club?).
- **Apply for university funding:** create and present a budget request to administrative group for your club (recreation sports council, student activities council, etc.). Specifics of applying vary by school, so learn the procedures and follow all applicable rules and deadlines.
- **Seek out alternative school funding sources:** universities have a myriad of departments, associations, and foundations; check them all for funding opportunities. Try the office of student affairs, student union, parents association, alumni association, etc. Money is often available from unexpected sources.
- **Run table tennis tournaments:** that's right, running a table tennis tournament on campus is probably the best way to raise money and promote your club at the same time. Keep costs low (with a free or inexpensive facility and prizes donated or provided by sponsors) and you can make \$100s to \$1000s per event.
- **Hold on-campus fundraisers:** you could sell things on campus, hold a silent auction; get creative! Or if you don't want to think too hard, [www.campusfundraiser.com](http://www.campusfundraiser.com) has a bunch of links for ways to raise money on campus.