

## FALL 2025 TABLE TENNIS RULES

(Updated 7/11/2025)

*Recent rule changes will in appear hi-lighted and italicized font.*

### **Rule 1: Facility**

1. All matches will be played in the Field House. Alcohol and tobacco are not permitted inside the facility.

### **Rule 2: Player Eligibility**

1. All Intramural Sports eligibility rules apply. Please check the Intramural Sports Rules and Regulations carefully.
2. Prior to participating, all players must check-in with the Sport Programs Supervisor. To check-in, participants must have a photo available through IMLeagues, or must provide a University of Iowa or government-issued photo ID.

### **Rule 3: Equipment**

1. Participants are encouraged to bring their own paddles and table tennis balls. If needed, participants may obtain paddles and table tennis balls from the Field House Front Desk prior to each match.
2. Prior to each match beginning, both players must agree on the type of ball(s) being used. If teams cannot agree, balls provided by the Field House Front Desk will be used.

### **Rule 4: Pool Play Match Rules**

1. A match shall consist of one game.
2. The match shall be won by the player first scoring 21 points unless both players score 20 points.
  - a. If both players are tied at 20 points, the game is won by the first player subsequently gaining a lead of two points.
  - b. The game will not be capped and will continue until one of the players wins by two points.
3. For any matches that are defaulted or forfeited in pool play, the player who checked in will win by score of 7-0. The score will factor in when determining seedings for the single-elimination tournament.
4. The winner of a coin toss or rock/paper/scissors between opponents shall have choice of serving, receiving, or choice of ends for the first game.
  - a. The loser of the toss shall have the remaining choice.
5. Players will alternate serves after every five serves.
  - a. If tied at 20, players will alternate serves every point until someone wins the game by leading by two.
6. A player must allow the ball to bounce before playing the ball.
7. If any disagreement occurs regarding a point, a game, or any other play situation, it shall be mutually agreed by all players in the game that the point or situation be played over immediately.

### **Rule 5: Single-Elimination Tournament Match Rules**

1. A match shall consist of the best-of-five games.

2. A game shall be won by the player/team first scoring 11 points unless both players score 10 points.
  - a. If both players are tied at 10 points, the game is won by the first player(s) subsequently gaining a lead of two points.
  - b. The game will not be capped and will continue until one of the players wins by two points.
3. The winner of a coin toss or rock/paper/scissors between opponents shall have choice of serving, receiving, or choice of ends for the first game.
  - a. The loser of the toss shall have the remaining choice.
4. Players will alternate serves after every two serves until game point.
  - a. If tied at 10, players will alternate serves every point until someone wins the game by leading by two.
5. The players will alternate serve and side each game.
6. A player must allow the ball to bounce before making a play on it.
7. If any disagreement occurs regarding a point, a game, or any other play situation, it shall be mutually agreed by all players in the game that the point or situation be played over immediately.

**Rule 6: Service**

1. Service shall start with the ball resting freely on the open palm of the server's stationary free hand.
2. The server shall then project the ball near vertically upwards, without imparting spin, so that it rises at least 16cm after leaving the palm of the free hand and then falls without touching anything before being struck.
3. As the ball is falling the server shall strike it so it touches first their court and then, after passing over or around the net assembly, touches directly the receiver's court.
4. From the start of the service and until it is struck, the ball shall be above the level of the playing surface and behind the server's end line, and it shall not be hidden from the receiver by any part of the body or clothing of the server.
5. For the serve to be legal, it cannot bounce twice on the server's court.
6. A let shall be called during the service if the ball, in passing over or around the net assembly, touches it, provided the service is otherwise good or the ball is obstructed by the receiver.
  - a. There is no limit on how many lets may occur successively.
7. Service must be made diagonally and cross court.
  - a. In singles, players must alternate sides after each serve as to serve from left-to-right followed by right-to-left or vice versa.

**Rule 7: Order of Return**

1. The ball, having been served or returned, shall be struck so that it passes over or around the net assembly and touches the opponent's court, either directly or after touching the net assembly.
2. Once served or returned, the receiver shall then make a good return, and thereafter server and receiver alternately shall make a good return.

**Rule 8: Scoring Points**

1. Unless the rally is a let, a player shall score a point if the opponent fails to make a good service.
2. A player shall score a point if the opponent fails to make a good return.

3. A player shall score a point if after the player has made a good service or a good return, the ball touches anything other than the net assembly before being struck by the opponent.
4. A player shall score a point if the ball passes beyond the end line without touching the court, after being struck by the opponent.
5. A player shall score a point if the opponent or anything the opponent wears or carries moves the playing surface.
6. A player shall score a point if the opponent or anything the opponent wears or carries touches the net assembly.
7. A player shall score a point if the opponent's free hand touches the playing surface.

**Rule 9: Reporting Scores**

1. The winner of each match must report the result of the match to the Sport Programs Supervisor.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If there is inclement weather and Intramural Sports are scheduled, check the [Intramural Sports website](#) for cancellation information. The Sport Programs Staff will also attempt to notify participants scheduled to play that night. You can also sign-up for Intramural Sports notifications through the [Recreational Services app](#).