

# MDTTC News



New MDTTC Players/Assistant Coaches Zhang Liang Bojun and Chen Jie

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## Archive of past MDTTC Newsletters

Welcome to the latest 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 [James Wu/Llewellyn realtor](#). 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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## Ongoing Programs

- **Beginning Junior Class.** This is for beginning juniors ages 6-13, with Coach Larry Hodges (with Rocky Wang and Raghu Nadmichettu assisting), and are held Saturdays 10:30AM-Noon and Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM. See the [Group Training page](#).
- **Group Sessions.** While this is primarily for juniors, all ages are welcome - it's about 1/3 adults. They meet on Sat & Sun, 4:30-6:30. The first 30 minutes is practice/warm-up, then 90 minutes of matches. See the [Group Training page](#).
- **Adults (55+) Morning Classes.** These are run by Coach Rocky Wang, for the more "mature" player. For more info, see the [info flyer](#) or [email Rocky](#).
- **Physical Training for Serious Table Tennis Athletes.** Want to get in shape for table tennis (or just to get in shape)? Coach Rocky Wang runs this training session, Mondays 6-7PM. For more info, see the [Group Training Page](#) or [email Rocky](#).
- **Private Coaching,** by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Larry Hodges, Wang Qing Liang, Chen Bo Wen, and Rocky Wang. See [Private Coaching page](#).
- **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](#).

## [Butterfly MDTTC March Tournament](#)

Our next tournament is this weekend, March 2-3 - don't miss it! Taking over as the new tournament director will be [Charlene Liu](#). For questions, email or call her at 202-459-9096.

## [Book Signing with Larry Hodges](#)

Larry Hodges is doing a book signing at MDTTC on Friday, March 8, at 7PM, for his new book, *Table Tennis Tactics for Thinkers* (240 pages, 21 chapters). Here's your chance to get an autographed copy of this or his other books, which will also be on sale: "Table Tennis: Steps to Success"; "Table Tennis Tales & Techniques"; and "Pings and Pongs." All books at the signing are on sale for \$15. *Special:* Buy a copy of the "Tactics" book, and get a copy of "Tales and Techniques" for only \$5! Bring your own tactical questions - Larry will be happy to discuss them.

## **Special Butterfly Tournament Tables For Sale: Pre-order required: deadline March 10th**

Limited quantity of Butterfly Centerfold 25 Tables to be used at the Cary Cup available for sale. Please email Wen at [Marylandttc@gmail.com](mailto:Marylandttc@gmail.com) or call her at 240.257.6868 for special discount.

## [MDTTC Welcomes New Players/Coaches](#)

Two new players/practice partners/assistant coaches arrived at MDTTC from China on Monday, Feb. 25. They are Zhang Liang Bojun, a right-handed shakehander from the Hunan Province Team, and Chen Jie, a lefty shakehander from the Guanxi Province who was training at the Shandong Luneng School. (See their picture at the top.) They will join assistant coaches Wang Qing Liang (rated 2598, Men's Singles Semifinalist at the 2012 U.S. Open, a chopper/looper) Chen Bo Wen (rated 2494, a two-winged penhold looper), Raghu Nadmichettu, and Head Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, and myself. Other MDTTC coaches include Rocky Wang and Jeffrey Zeng Xun (currently in Taiwan but returning this summer)

## [Spring Break Camp](#)

This will take place March 25-29, during the local school Spring break. Hours are Mon-Fri, 10AM - 6PM. Register now to reserve your spot!

## **Rental Space for Corporate and Private Events**

MDTTC offers space rental for special corporate and private events. Here is [Facility Rental Information](#), and here is info on [Birthday Party Packages](#).

## **Double Take Deals**

MDTTC has a special running at [DoubleTakeDeals.com](#) - "\$50 For 10 Unlimited Ping Pong Passes (\$100 Value)." If you aren't an MDTTC member but are thinking of joining, don't miss this opportunity!!!

## **MDTTC Web and Facebook Pages**

Don't forget to see the regularly updated [MDTTC Facebook page](#), and make sure to "like" it! Stop by and see all the photos, read the latest news, or post your own comments. Also see the [MDTTC web page](#) for regularly updated info.

## **TIP OF THE MONTH: Learn to Play Defense**

By Larry Hodges

It's a common mistake for beginning players to develop their attacks, but not their defense. You need both. The problem comes about because a beginning player usually starts out learning to hit forehands and backhands, and once developed, these are primarily offensive shots. These are important shots when attacking, but what about when the opponent attacks?

Against many attacks, you can counter-attack. However, this can lead to some rather wild, low percentage shots. A little defense would be the better option. So it's important to learn to defend, such as blocking.

It doesn't have to be passive blocking; you can block aggressively. Take the ball quick off the bounce and quick-hit the ball to the opponent's wide corners or middle (the transition point between forehand and backhand), and keep moving him around these three spots, and you'll often force a miss or weaker shot you can attack. The most common way to beat an attacker is to attack first, but if you can block, you take much of that advantage away, and turn your defense into a transition back to your own attack.

Many table tennis drills involve one player attacking, the other blocking. When you are the blocker in such a drill, take this just as seriously as you would when you are attacking. Many players treat drills as something where the two players take turns drilling. *Never!!!* A drill is a two-way thing, and whatever your opponent is doing, you are drilling against it. You learn to block by blocking, and the best time to do that is by focusing on your blocking in drills. Work on precision - if you learn to block the ball accurately and consistently in drills, this will show up in matches as well. You can also practice advanced variations, such as topspin blocks (i.e. mini-loops), dead blocks, and chop and sidespin blocks.

You can also learn other defensive shots, such as lobbing, fishing and chopping. Lobbing is a high defensive topspin shot, usually done off a smash. It's often a desperation tactic, but in the hands of an expert, it's a valuable way to win a few points that otherwise would be lost. Fishing is a lower defensive topspin shot, where you keep the ball roughly one to four feet high. Fishing defense is central to many players' games, especially loopers, who play off the table and need an off-table shot to defend with. Fishing and lobbing, done at the higher levels (where the ball goes deep with topspin and sometimes sidespin), are basically just defensive loops. They are a bit

more advanced than blocking, but if you have mobility off the table, they are valuable shots to have. Fishing and lobbing tend to go together as most players who do one do the other as well.

Chopping is a more specialized defense, and while I don't recommend most offensive players to back off the table and try to chop down an opponent, it's valuable to be able to throw in a chop now and then, especially on the backhand when you are out of position. Plus, of course, many players play a chopping style, in which case chopping is central to their game.

Note that I don't include pushing as a defensive shot. A defensive shot is done against an incoming offensive shot. A push is more a sparring backspin shot against an incoming non-offensive shot, such as a backspin or no-spin push or serve. If done poorly, it's a defensive shot, but that's because it's done poorly. It should be more of a neutral shot.

Many years ago MDTTC Coach Cheng Yinghua, back when he was the #1 player in the U.S. for a decade, said that the biggest weakness of top U.S. players were their fundamentals, in particular their defense. When players attacked against the best players in the U.S. at the time - Cheng, David Zhuang, Ilija Lupulesku - they faced great defense (blocking by the first two, fishing and lobbing by Lupulesku), and struggled to win a point. When these three attacked, opponent after opponent would crumble due to their lack of defensive skills. This is true at all levels. So learn to play defense, and make your opponents be the ones who crumble when the other player attacks.