

MDTTC News



Nathan Hsu and Crystal Wang in doubles action at the Butterfly South Shore Open; Crystal wins 3 titles, 3 trophies, and \$1700.

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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](#), [Go Table Tennis](#), 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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[MDTTC Christmas Camp](#)

It's coming up soon, **Dec. 26-31!** Our Christmas camps always fill up, so make sure to reserve your spot early. [Here's the info page!](#)

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[Beginning/Intermediate Junior Class](#) - Winter session starts December 7

Sign up for Winter Sessions now! Winter Sessions begins December 7 & 8. Here is the [Junior Class page](#). We're in the middle of a Fall session; our Sunday afternoon class is full, but if your child wants to start right away, the Saturday morning classes still have a couple spots available.

[New Afterschool Program](#)

Starting in January MDTTC will be running an Afterschool program that combines table tennis and schoolwork, with courtesy pickups at schools or houses. MDTTC coaches and staff will pick up students after school (from selected areas), and bring them to the club where they will have a one-hour table tennis session, practice time, and do homework with our resident tutors.

MDTTC October Open

[Here are the results](#) of the MDTTC October Open, care of Omnipong. Click on the event to see all results. Congrats to Open Champion Jang Ho Kim and Runner-up Chen Bo Wen, as well as our other champions and finalists - see below! Thanks goes to Tournament Director Charlene Liu, Referee Paul Kovac, and sponsors Butterfly, Llewellyn Realtors/James Wu, and ALL the participants!

Open Singles RR	Jang Ho Kim	Bo Wen Chen
Under 2400 RR	Steven Dong	Larire Larry Abass
Under 2250 RR	Napoleon F. Reyes Jr.	Nazruddin Asgarali
Under 2050 RR	T.J. Sawner	Wesley Duan
Under 1900 RR	Ayan Bagchi	Ryan Dabbs
Under 1650 RR	Gordon Lee	Morteza Sajed
Under 1400 RR	Spencer Chen	Patrick Chen
Under 1150 RR	Daniel Gong	Marcelo Pires
Age U-12	Spencer Chen	Matvey Stepanov

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](#).

RGIII Video

On October 11, Robert Griffin III (alias RGIII, the Washington Redskins quarterback) put out a [video](#) (3:22) where he talked about his Olympic dreams. At the end of it (go to 2:57) he jokes that he might make the Olympics in ping-pong. *We at MDTTC decided we were not going to take this quietly.* [Here is the response video](#) (1:15), created by Nathan Hsu (17, 2303 but recently 2397), with players Derek Nie (12, 2297), Crystal Wang (11, 2267), and Roy Ke (14, 2261), all MDTTC players. You absolutely *HAVE* to watch this. The video has gone semi-viral, with 11,797 views as of this writing. It was featured on NFL Network, and on the websites for Sports Illustrated, USA Today, Washington Post, Dallas News, as well as USATT, ITTF, USOC, and Table Tennis Nation.

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MDTTC Ongoing Programs

- **Junior Classes.** This is for beginning and intermediate juniors ages 6-14, with Coach Larry Hodges (with John Hsu and Raghu Nadmichettu assisting), and are held Saturdays 10:30AM-Noon and Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM. There is also a Montgomery County School program your kids can attend, Thursdays 6-7PM and Saturdays 9:30-10:30 AM. 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](#).
- **Private Coaching,** by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Larry Hodges, Wang Qing Liang ("Leon"), Chen Bo Wen ("Bowen"), Chen Jie ("James"), John Hsu, and Raghu Nadmichettu. 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](#).

Potomac November Open

The Potomac Open will be held locally at the Potomac TTC on Nov. 9-10. Here's the [entry form](#).

Butterfly South Shore Open

Highland, IN, Oct. 26-27, 2013

It was an exhausting weekend, but so is every tournament I coach at. There's no question - coaching is far more tiring than playing. Seriously!!!

Here are [results and pictures](#). I didn't get to see much of the tournament since I was busy coaching Crystal, rated 2267, was top seed in all three junior events she was in - 13 & Under, 15 & Under, and 18 & Under - and she swept all three events without losing a game to anyone, capturing \$1700 in prize money, care of the Nate Wasserman Junior Championships. She played Anushka Oak (13, rated 2091) in all three finals.

I was mostly coaching Nathan this tournament. He went in rated only 2303, well below his norm - he was 2397 just a short time ago. In the Open, he reached the quarterfinals, losing deuce in the 7th to unrated Wang Zhao, a former member of the Chinese National Team and only 28 years old. (In the semifinals, Wang Zhao's racket - the same one he'd used against Nathan - was ruled too thick, and so he had to use an unfamiliar racket, and lost.) Nathan had another nice match in the semifinals of Under 18 in a best of five, against top-seeded Jonathan Ou, rated 2472. Jonathan won, 11-8 in the fifth. Nathan won 3rd place.

On the way back we had to wait at the airport in Chicago for over an hour. So the kids and I grabbed our paddles, and walked about until we found some tables. Then it was time for Airport Pong!!! I didn't actually play any this time (knee problems), so I was just the ball boy as Nathan, Derek, and Crystal took turns. I don't have video, but here's [Airport Pong video](#) (1:43) from after the 2012 Junior Olympics/Southern Open at Houston Airport, with Nathan, Amy Lu (the lefty), and Lily Lin.

It was a fun tournament, and we had a great time. The lighting was great, with wooden floors and lots of room. Great thanks goes to Director Dan Seemiller; to the tournament committee (Brad Balmer, Steve Betts, Jason Denham, and Pam Hazinski); to referee Kagin Lee; and to the local South Bend Table Tennis Club.

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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.

VEEP

The HBO TV show VEEP recently filmed an episode that featured table tennis. They put out a call for table tennis players, and I spent a loooong day with them (Oct. 9). Here's the [write-up in my blog](#).

TIP OF THE MONTH: Mid-Match Technique Adjustments

By Larry Hodges

One of the axioms of coaching is that you can't fix technique in the middle of a match. Whether coaching someone in a match, or trying to make adjustments yourself in a match, technique is something that needs to be honed in practice so it becomes automatic (i.e. subconscious) in an actual game. The reason for this is that the game is mostly played subconsciously. You don't consciously do technique very well in a game situation, or even choose the proper racket angle - your subconscious does all this after you've honed it in practice. There are just too many things to remember to do for one to do so consciously; the minute you take conscious control all that training is out the window. To fix something in mid-match means to consciously take control, and that rarely goes well.

This is why the conscious mind's task during a match is mostly tactical - choosing what serves to use, how to receive, how to rally, etc. (And even there, much of it becomes subconscious - for example, when your conscious mind decides to attack deep serves, for this to work the subconscious has to get the message so it does so automatically.) The conscious mind should also focus on sports psychology - but that's basically techniques to get the conscious mind out of the way so the subconscious can take control.

There are a few times when you can make basic fixes to stroking problems, though not necessarily technique problems. (I will write this as if I was coaching a player in a match, but you can do this yourself, i.e. coaching yourself in the same way.)

Suppose your player lifts way too much when looping or smashing, and keeps going off the end. (There could be a dozen technical reasons for this; he might be standing up too straight, or using too much arm, or not transferring his weight forward, etc.) Trying to fix his technique directly probably won't work - that's something you'll have to do after the match, when you can zero in on the specific problem and drill the player to do it properly. So what can you do? Instead of trying to fix the technique, understand that the poor technique is putting the ball off the end when it aims for the table. So change the target; tell the player to aim for the top of the net. If the player makes a conscious decision to aim for this, and then lets the subconscious do this, it'll probably get the message and aim for the top of the net - and will likely do just what it was doing before, i.e. aiming too high, and so it'll instead go over the net and hit the table.

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Suppose your player has, say, a wristy forehand that causes him to lose control. Telling him to change his technique isn't going to help in that match; it'll just put him in the position of trying to learn a brand new technique, i.e. a wristless forehand he hasn't used before. His subconscious doesn't know what to do, and so you essentially turn the player into a beginner, at least with this one aspect. You could, of course, think of the match as just practice and have the player focus on the technique. Then it's not really a "match" so much as a practice session. But it's a highly inefficient practice session as the player will only haphazardly get to use the shot in question, and when it comes up, guess what? He'll reflexively do what his subconscious is used to doing, i.e. the poor technique. That's why to fix technique you have to practice it in a drill situation, where you do it over and over and over until it is so honed that the subconscious can do it in a match. If it can't, then it'll fall back on old habits during the match, and re-enforce the bad habit.

Suppose your player is standing up too straight, which leads to all sorts of technique problems, such as lifting too much when looping. If he's used to standing up straight all the time, there's not a lot you can do in the middle of a match. On the other hand, if the player sometimes stays low but other times (perhaps in the pressure of a match) stands up too straight, reminding him to stay low is a simple message that the subconscious can get since it's used to staying low, and it solves the technique problems.

Sometimes it's not a technique problem so much as adjusting to something the subconscious hasn't seen before, and so isn't able to react properly. For example, suppose my player keeps blocking an opponent's slow, spinny loops off the end. The player hasn't seen such spinny loops before (at least not enough for the subconscious to learn what to do automatically), and so nearly every block goes off. I could tell him to close his racket angle - but that probably wouldn't work. In a game situation the subconscious automatically chooses the racket angle, and trying to adjust this against these super-spinny loops in the middle of a match is slow and difficult. If you tell your player to close the racket more, and he tries to do so consciously, he will likely lose what little control he had as his conscious mind can't reflexively do the proper angle in the split second it has to do so, and will tend to fall back on the reflexive angle that wasn't working before. So consciously telling oneself to close the racket more isn't really that helpful - the subconscious can see that it's blocking off the end, and is already trying to make adjustments (often too slowly) if you let it. (The more you play the easier these adjustments becomes.)

However, if you tell the player to block more aggressively, then the spin won't take on the paddle as much, and the player won't be as susceptible to heavy topspin as before. It's a simple message to the subconscious - "block harder!" - and as long as it's not overdone ("harder" doesn't mean "smash"), it will often solve the problem.

Here's my recommendation: focus on developing proper technique in practice, not in matches. Work with a coach or top player if possible, or watch videos. Get the technique down before using it in serious matches. It's okay if you don't yet have the timing for the techniques as long as you are doing it mostly properly. Matches are a great way to learn, but they are not the place to develop technique.