

# MDTTC News



## MDTTC Birthday Parties

(Timothy OuYang's birthday party on Saturday, Jan. 25)

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### Archive of past MDTTC Newsletters

Welcome to the 21th 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/Long & Foster 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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#### **Baltimore Sun Features Crystal Wang**

[Here's an article and video](#) (1:32) in the Baltimore Sun on 11-year-old Crystal Wang, who recently became the youngest player ever to win Under 22 Women at the USA Nationals. (She's from my club!) Here are [more photos](#).

#### **Adult Beginning/Intermediate Class Starts Feb. 17**

MDTTC is running a new 10-week Beginning/Intermediate Class, on Mondays, 6:30-8:00 PM starting Feb. 17. Here is the [class flyer](#). Class is for beginners to roughly 1500 level. This is mostly an adult class; minimum age is 13 or permission of instructor. All major aspects of the game will be covered, including the strokes, serve & receive, footwork, tactics, and equipment. Class will be taught by Coach Larry Hodges. To sign up, email [Coach Larry](#).

#### **Mini-Camps on Feb. 17 and Mar. 28**

With Montgomery Country Schools closed on Feb. 17 and Mar. 28, MDTTC will run mini-camps on those dates, 10AM-6PM. We just had mini-camps on Jan. 20-21 when schools were closed for Martin Luther King's Day and

a teacher's professional day. (Over twenty showed the first day; seven brave players showed up despite heavy snow the second day.) [Here's the brochure.](#)

### **MDTTC Tournaments**

Mark your calendars! We have four tournaments scheduled at MDTTC for 2014: March 1-2, April 5-6, Aug. 23-24, and Oct. 18-19. Here's the [info page](#), which includes a link to the [entry form](#). Don't forget to sign up for the upcoming one March 1-2! Special thanks goes to Charlene Liu for running these tournaments.

### **Afterschool Program**

Starting in January MDTTC has 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. The academic tutors are Larry Hodges and Wen Hsu. [Here's the brochure](#) with further info, including background on the tutors.

### **MDTTC Birthday Parties**

Want to have a table tennis birthday party? [Here's info!](#) We've had five in the past two months. (See pictures at top from Timothy OuYang's birthday party.) Parties include one hour of coaching and games led by an MDTTC coach, usually Coach Larry.

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

MDTTC offers space rental for special corporate and private events. We also hosted many community, fundraising and private tournaments. Here is [Facility Rental Information](#).

### **Ongoing Programs**

- **Junior Classes** – NEW TEN-WEEK SESSION BEGAN DEC. 7 & 8 - but you can still sign up and pay a pro-rated fee. 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 [Sunday Elite League](#).

### **MDTTC Club Shirts**

MDTTC Team Shirts are still available @ \$29.99! (Retail is \$49.99.) To personalize with your name costs only \$5.99 extra. Color options: lime green, black, or red. Limited sizes and quantity. To order yours, drop by MDTTC or email [Marylandttc@gmail.com](mailto:Marylandttc@gmail.com)

### **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: Practicing Serves the Productive Way**

By Larry Hodges

It's almost a cliché. I hand someone a box of balls to practice their serves. They grab a ball and serve, grab a ball and serve, grab a ball and serve, and so on, all done with the speed and thoughtfulness of firing a machine gun. Then they wonder why their serves aren't any good. There's a lot more to developing great serves than rapid-fire serve practice, where the goal seems to be to empty the box of balls as rapidly as possible. So what should you do differently?

First and foremost, learn the proper way to execute great serves. You can do this by watching players with great serves, or a coach or top player can show you. It's pointless to practice your serves if you don't know how to do them properly.

Once you have at least some idea of what you need to practice, get that box of balls and go to the table. It's generally best done alone; having someone return your serve can be a distraction, especially when you are learning a new serve. (But sometimes you want someone to return your serves, so you can get feedback, and to see how much difficulty they have.)

Grab a ball and get ready to start. You might want to first hold a ball in your fingers (tightly) and practice the actual contact you are going to make with the ball. (But don't rub the sponge into the held ball too hard or you'll damage your sponge.)

Now go into your serving position, and come to a complete stop. The rules actually state that you must start the serve with the ball resting freely on the palm of your *stationary* free hand--but there's a more important reason to do this than complying with the rules.

This is where you visualize the serve in your head. Don't just grab a ball and mechanically serve it; from now on, never serve a ball without first seeing it done exactly as you want it done, in your head. This is what the top players do. Visualization is one of the best tools in sports, and for serving, it's especially good since there are no outside influences--it's just you and the ball. In your head, see how you swing at the ball, the contact, and the entire trajectory of the serve as you want it.

After you've visualized the serve in your head, go ahead and serve. Don't try to guide it; let the subconscious take over. (You should do this for all table tennis shots.) Let go; you're just an observer. Watch the ball as it leaves your racket. Did it bounce on each side of the table at the spot as you visualized? Did it bounce low to the net as you visualized? Did it go at the speed you visualized? Did it have the spin you visualized? Did it go short or long as you visualized? Am I emphasizing the word *visualize* enough for you to make clear its importance?

Now visualize the next serve, making corrections for what went wrong in the previous one, and emphasizing the aspects that went right. You are now well on your way to developing great serves. You should also be tired and sweaty pretty soon--serving is a very physical motion. You can't make the ball spin at extremely high speeds if you can't get your racket moving at extremely high speeds, like a whip.

Does any of this sound boring? It shouldn't. If you just grab a ball and serve, grab a ball and serve, grab a ball and serve, that's like working an assembly line at a factory. *That's boring*. But serving is the trick part of table tennis, and practicing your serves, and all the tricky, deceptive things you can do with them, while revving up and varying the spin, is like practicing a magic trick. That's not boring, and neither should practicing serves.