

MDTTC News

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MDTTC Christmas Camp 2015
(Not all campers nor coaches are pictured)

[Archive of Past MDTTC Newsletters](#)

Welcome to the 31st 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](#). 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](#)

CONTENT IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Nate Wasserman \$1000 Junior Award**
- **Westchester December Open**
- **USA Nationals**
- **New Notable MDTTC Players/Coaches**
- **MDTTC Christmas Camp**
- **Junior Group Classes: Winter Session Begins Jan 4th, 2015**
- **On Going Program: Private Coaching/ Afterschool Program/ Leagues**
- **MDTTC Birthday Parties / Rental Space for Corporate and Private Events**
- **MDTTC Web and Facebook Pages**
- **Tip of the Month: Keep Your Strokes Simple**

Nate Wasserman \$1000 Junior Award

[Here's a picture of Nathan Hsu](#) getting awarded the \$1000 Nate Wasserman Award at the USA Nationals in Las Vegas in December. He won it by winning 18 & Under at the South Shore Open in October over Victor Liu. [Here's my write-up](#) of the tournament.

Westchester December Open

MDTTC player and coach Ruichao Alex Chen won the four-star Westchester December Open Dec. 27-28 at the Westchester TTC in New York, defeating Michael Landers in the final, 7,9,7. [Here's a video](#) of the final (19:03). MDTTC player Nathan Hsu made the final of Under 2500, losing to Kun Yang in the final, 5,-9,15,9.) Here are the [results](#). Here are photos by [Glen Randmer](#) and [Warren Rosenberg](#).

USA Nationals

MDTTC's Crystal Wang, 12, a sixth grader in the magnet program at Roberto Clemente Middle School in Boyds, MD, became the youngest player ever to reach the final of Men's or Women's Singles at the USA National Table Tennis Championships held Dec. 16-20 in Las Vegas, according to USA Table Tennis Historian Tim Boggan. In the semifinals she defeated top-seeded Zheng Jiaqi of California, 4-2 in games. She lost in the final 4-1 to Lily Zhang, also of California, who had also won in 2012.

Crystal also won Under 22 Women's Single for the second year in a row. Last year she was the youngest ever to win the event at age 11; this year she became the second youngest ever at age 12. She also made the semifinals in three other events: Women's Doubles (with Diane Jiang), Mixed Doubles (with Han Xiao), and Junior Girls' Teams (also with Diane Jiang). She also made both the USA Junior (under 18) and Cadet (under 15) National Teams. Her new rating after the Nationals is 2421.

Other MDTTC players who did well include:

- **Han Xiao**, who made the semifinals of Men's Singles and Mixed Doubles, and the quarterfinals of Men's Doubles, which he has won four times before.
- **Donna Sakai** not only made the final of Over 60 Women's Doubles (with Connie Sweeris of Michigan), but was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by USA Table Tennis for her achievements and contributions as a player and official.
- **Charlene Liu** - Over 60 Women's Singles Finalist and Over 60 Women's Doubles Champion
- **Dave Sakai** - Over 65 Men's Singles Quarterfinalist, Over 65 Men's Doubles Champion, Over 60 Men's Doubles Finalist
- **Patrick Mualem** - Over 30 Semifinalist
- **Tiffany Ke** - Under 11 Girls' Singles Semifinalist, Minicadet Girls' Singles Quarterfinalist
- **Ronald Chen** - Under 11 Boys' Singles Quarterfinalist
- **Daniel Sofer** - Under 11 Boys' Singles Quarterfinalist
- **Klaus Wood** - Under 2000 Champion, Under 1800 Champion
- **Larry Hodges** - Over 40 Hardbat Singles Finalist

New Notable MDTTC Players

We have two new notable players at MDTTC. One is our new player/coach/practice partner Sun Jianhao. He's 19, estimated 2600+ level player. No Americanized name for him yet - how about "Sunny"? (How many locals remember former MDTTC junior star Sunny Li?)

The other is 13-year-old Klaus Wood. He's not really "new" - he started out in one of our junior classes about six years ago. But he's spent most of these past six years in Taiwan, returning to Maryland periodically. He's caused havoc at the last two USA Nationals, where his rating has gone from 637 to 1747, then 1747 to 2370. That's a gain of 1110 and 623 points, respectively, or 1733 in two

tournaments! We're fairly certain that's a record. As a 637-rated player he beat a player rated 2261, a 1624 rating difference - I'm betting that's also a record.

MDTTC Christmas Camp

MDTTC ran a Christmas camp for the 23rd year in a row. Over 40 players attended, along with the entire MDTTC coaching staff. See camp photo at top.

Beginning Junior Classes. The Winter Session begins on January 4, 2015. This is for beginners to advanced beginners, ages 6-14, with Coach Larry (with John Hsu and others assisting), and are held on Sundays 4:30-6:00 PM, and Thursdays from 6-7PM. The next Thursday session begins on January 8; there are only 3 spots remaining. For more info, see the [Junior Group Training Page](#).

Ongoing Programs

Private Coaching, by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Larry Hodges, Jeffrey Zeng, Wang Qing Liang, Alex Ruichao Chen, Jianhao Sun, Bowen Chen, John Hsu, and Raghu Nadmichettu. See [Private Coaching page](#). For limited time, Coach Jeffrey Zeng is accepting students new to MDTTC at discounted rates. Please check out Amazon Local and search for Maryland Table Tennis Center for this special offer.

Afterschool Program. This program 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 info flyer.](#)

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](#). Joining these leagues is a great way to meet other players at your level. All our leagues are extremely popular.

Group Sessions. While this is primarily for juniors, all ages are welcome - it's about 1/3 adults. They meet on Saturdays, 4:30-6:30. The first 30 minutes is practice/warm-up, then 90 minutes of matches. See the [Group Training page](#).

MDTTC Birthday Parties / Facility Rental for Corporate & Private Events

Want to have a table tennis birthday party? [Here's info!](#) Parties include one hour of coaching and games led by an MDTTC coach, usually Coach Larry. Here is [Facility Rental Information](#).

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: Keep Your Strokes Simple

By Larry Hodges

One of the secrets of coaching is that most of it isn't teaching someone what to do; it's teaching them what *not* to do. There's a reason top players make it look so easy - their strokes *are* easy, because they are simple and relatively short. There's no wasted motion, and very few actual components to each stroke - and the each part of the stroke naturally leads to the next. A good stroke is symphony of simplicity.

The best strokes are basically the most efficient ways of getting the racket to go from Point A to Point B while creating maximum power. Roughly speaking, correct grip and foot positioning are each one-fourth of the battle. Learning where Point A is - where the racket should backswing to, and the rest of the body's backswing motion - is another one-fourth of the battle. Then letting the shot go naturally and with proper contact is the final one-fourth. If you get the grip, foot positioning, and backswing correct, the rest is natural, though it is often amazing how many weird (and technically poor) incarnations of the stroke players can come up with. Most of these involve flopping the wrist or elbow, or holding back on part of the swing, such as stopping the body rotation so that you stroke mostly with arm, or swinging only with the upper body. Once you have this perfect (or near-perfect) stroke, then it's just a matter of developing the timing to turn it into a weapon of pong destruction.

Done properly, a good stroke is a thing of beauty that channels great power with minimal effort and maximum efficiency. It's the cartographical equivalent of driving from Point A to Point B. A coach's primary job is to get you buckled in properly for this journey (grip and foot positioning), get the backswing right (get you to Point A), and then set you on your way to Point B with no detours, and nothing but constant acceleration through the halfway point (contact) and continuing to Point B.