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L-R: Wen Hsu, Mu Du, Jackson Beaver (in back), Andy Wu, Jason Liu, Larry Hodges (in back), Jason Li, Adrian Yang, Kay Okawa, Avi Gupta, Ainish Dassarma (in front), Lidney Castro, Nicole Deng, Hanfei Hu, John Hsu (in back), Lance Wei, Linda Shu, Hina Sheikh, and Wang Qing Liang.
Missing: Ryan Lee and Alexander Yang.

Welcome to the 59th 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 [HW Global Foundation](#). 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](#); Publisher Wen Hsu.

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BUTTERFLY MDTTC 3-STAR TOURNAMENT APRIL 8-9

Deadline to enter is 7PM on Friday, April 7! Here is the [tournament page](#) and here is the [entry form](#). You can also enter online at [Omnipong](#). We expanded our tournaments from last year, going to two days and three-star events, doubling the prize money, and going from seven to ten events. The ten events are (on Saturday, with prize money in all events): Open, U2400, U2200, U2000, Over 50, and Under 15, and (on Sunday): U1800, U1500, U1200, and Under 12. Larry Hodges will be directing, assisted by Mossa Barandao, with International Umpire and Certified Referee Paul Kovac as referee.

[Pong Mobile](#) will provide additional prizes for two of the events. Check out its table tennis mobile app station near the check in desk at MDTTC April Open. "Pong Mobile is a US based players' rating search application for the sport of table tennis. The app is designed for mobile and desktop use." See their [video demo](#) (2:30)!

SPRING BREAK CAMP

The camp will be held April 10-14. It's for all ages and levels, though it'll be dominated by kids. [Here's info on the camp](#) and our upcoming summer camps.

APPOINTMENTS TO USATT POSITIONS

Do you know that several MDTTC members have been appointed to important USATT positions?

- **Wang Qing Liang:** USATT National Team Coach
- **Dennis Taylor:** USATT Legal Counsel and Secretary
- **Gary Schlager:** Member of USATT Board of Directors and member of the USATT Audit and Compensation Committees
- **Larry Hodges:** Member of USATT Board of Directors and Chair of the USATT Coaching Committee
- **Wen Hsu:** Member of the USATT High Performance Committee

USATT REGIONAL HOPES CAMP AND TOURNAMENT AT MDTTC



*Players and Officials at the USATT Hopes Tournament
On right is Referee Paul Kovac and Umpire Joseph Lee. (Missing: Umpire Stephen Yeh.)*

Congrats MDTTC locals Nicole Deng, who qualified for the USA Girls' Hopes Team, and Alex Yang, who qualified for the USA Boys' Hopes Team in the New Jersey Regional Hopes Tournament!

USATT Regional Hopes Camp and Tournament were held at MDTTC on March 4-5. [Here is the write-up in](#) Larry Hodges' blog.

In addition to the team trials, three junior events took place.

- **U2100:** 1st Linda Shu, 3-0; 2nd Nicole Deng, 2-2; 3rd Kallista Liu, 2-2
- **U1700:** 1st Ainish Dassarma, 4-0; 2nd Daniel Sofer, 3-1; 3rd Jackson Beaver, 2-2
- **U1300:** 1st Kay Okawa, 3-0; 2nd Jason Liu, 2-1; 3rd Kurtus Hsu, 1-2

USA TEAM TRIALS

They were held at the Triangle TTC in North Carolina, March 23-26. Here's the [home page](#) for the event, with results, articles, and video. Congrats to MDTTC-trained Crystal Wang for making the team and Coach Jack Huang for coaching her at the trial.

HW GLOBAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Crystal Wang was presented at the U.S. Team Trial in North Carolina with a \$500 scholarship from HW Global Foundation for her excellence in academics & table tennis.



MDTTC JUNIOR PROGRAMS

- **Sunday Novice to Intermediate Classes:** 4-5:30 pm, from now till June 11. Kids are grouped according to age and level. [Click here for more info and registration form.](#)
- **Thursdays Novice to Advanced Beginners Classes:** 6-7 pm from April 20 till June 15. Kids are grouped according to age and level. [Click here to register online.](#)
- **Tuesday Level 2 Classes:** 6-7 pm, from now till June 6. For age 8+ players who already know the basics in table tennis or have played table tennis for a year or more. [Click here for more info and registration form.](#)
- **Advanced Group Training for Juniors:** Fridays 5-7PM led by Coach Jack Huang & Saturdays 4:30-6:30 led by Coach Cheng Yinghua.

MDTTC ADULT PROGRAMS

- **Tuesday and/or Friday Lunch Group Training (1:00-2:00 pm)** for all levels. Improve your table tennis skills while getting great physical and mental exercises. Every player will get one-on-one playing time with Coach Jeffrey Zeng (2550+ rating).
- **Sunday Adult Training** from 7:00-8:30PM. No pre-registration is required, but if you have any questions, [email](#) Coach Larry. Complete beginners should take 2-3 private coaching sessions first so they can hit basic forehands, backhands, and push. *Be prepared to improve!!!*

CAPITAL AREA LEAGUE - Results and Upcoming

You can still sign up a team, or join a team, for the upcoming season of the [Capital Area Table Tennis League!](#) Deadline is April 5. You need at least three to form a team, though many teams have more, in case someone can't make one of the meets. If you'd like to join a current team, contact the league directors and they might be able to find you a team.

MDTTC LEAGUES

- **Tuesday and Friday Night Leagues.** All ages and levels. Please arrive prior to 7:25 pm to sign up. If you know you'll be a few minutes late, please call the club at 301-519-8580 BEFORE 7:20 pm, otherwise YOU WILL BE TURNED AWAY
- **Wednesday Night Recreational League.** This league is organized by players. From 7:15-9:00PM. See info page for more info.
- **Sunday Elite League.** This is primarily for players over 2000, and is on Sundays at 12:30PM.
- **Saturday Junior League.** For ages 6-18, from 6:30-8:30PM. Run by Coach Wang Qingliang, it includes warm-up, match play, game analysis, and physical training (time permitting). Players must be pre-approved by Coach Wang. Upcoming sessions are April 22, May 6, 13 & 20, June 3 & 24.

MDTTC PRIVATE COACHING

Private Coaching, by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Larry Hodges, Zeng Xun ("Jeffrey"), Wang Qing Liang ("Leon"), Chen Bo Wen ("Bowen"), and John Hsu. See [Private Coaching page.](#)

BIRTHDAY PARTIES & RENTAL SPACE FOR CORPORATE AND PRIVATE EVENTS

MDTTC offers birthday parties ran by our popular Coach Larry. We also regularly host community events and team-building activities for local businesses. Space rental for special corporate and private events are available. Here is [Facility Rental Information](#), and here is info on [Birthday Party Packages.](#)

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: Serve and Forehand Loop

By Larry Hodges

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, a common slogan in table tennis was "One gun is as good as two." This was back in the days of the all-out forehand attacker. Many of the dominant players (especially from Asia) would mostly just block on the backhand – often aggressive jab blocks, but not penetrating attacks – and end the point with the forehand. Some would relentlessly attack with the forehand, others would use those quick backhand blocks to set up the forehand, but the game was mostly centered around the forehand attack, whether it was smashing or looping.

While the art of the all-out forehand attack is dying out, most of the top players still strongly favor the forehand, and often still cover the whole table with it when they can, though they don't force it as often as players from the past. But there's one time where top players will still sometimes relentlessly use the forehand – and that's to follow up their serve. The whole idea of the serve is to force at least a slightly weak ball, and that's all that's needed for a top player to end the point – and the forehand is usually best for that.

So how do you go about developing a serve and forehand attack? Here are ten guidelines. (I'm assuming both players are righties; lefties and those playing lefties will have to adjust. Note that serve and forehand attack was my specialty during my playing days!)

- 1. Depth of Serve.** In general, long serves can be attacked and so are harder to follow up with a forehand attack. So most often you'll want to serve short. However, generally not too short – if you serve too short, the opponent can take it quick off the bounce and both rush you and angle you. He can also drop the ball short. The "ideal" third-ball attack serve is one that, given the chance, would bounce twice on the other side, with the second bounce as deep as possible, ideally an inch or so inside the end-line. With this depth, a receiver can't really rush you or angle you, and so you can follow with a forehand attack more often. But vary the depth – sometimes serve very long (first bounce near the end-line) or very short (especially to the forehand) to force the receiver to have to guard against many things.
- 2. Placement of Serve.** Below are guidelines. The key is to favor the best placement, but vary it so the receiver has to guard against them all, forcing more mistakes.
 - **If you serve short to the backhand**, you give the receiver a wide angle into your backhand, making it difficult to follow with a forehand. If you have fast feet, this can still be effective as you can crowd your backhand corner, knowing the receiver has no angle into your forehand and can only go down the line there.
 - **If you serve short to forehand**, you give the receiver a wide angle into your forehand. Since you have to guard against this, it leaves you open to a down-the-line receive into your backhand, taking away your forehand attack. However, many players aren't comfortable returning down the line against a short serve to the forehand, and automatically go crosscourt, giving the server a third-ball forehand attack. So it depends on the receiver.
 - **If you serve short to the middle**, you take away both extreme angles and have less total table to cover. This is generally the best placement if you want to follow your serve up with a forehand attack. The down side is it allows the receiver to choose whether to receive forehand or backhand, and so he can use his better side.
- 3. Spin Variation on Serve.** Many of the best third-ball serves are backspin serves, since they will often be pushed back long, allowing you to attack. However, if you overdo this, you make things rather easy for the receiver, who can push your predictable backspin serve back more and more aggressively. Instead, vary the serve. One of the best variations is to fake backspin and instead serve a very low no-spin serve. Receivers will often pop it up, and their pushes will have less spin than if they pushed against backspin. Also throw in sidespin and sidespin-topspin serves. The more you mix up your spins, the more problems the receiver will have. Key for all of these serves, especially no-spin serves, is to keep the ball low. This both makes it harder to attack the serve, and often makes passive returns even more passive.
- 4. Types of Sidespin on Serve.**
 - **If you serve a left sidespin** (such as a forehand pendulum serve, racket moving from right to left), then the receiver will tend to return the ball to your backhand side. Perhaps more important, it makes it tricky to return to the wide forehand, and so you can often stand more to your backhand side, allowing you to follow your serve with a forehand attack, even from the wide backhand. Most forehand attackers prefer

attacking from the backhand side as it puts them in position to follow up with another forehand attack. This type of sidespin serve is best done to the middle or backhand. If you do it short to the forehand, you have to guard against the angle into your forehand, giving the receiver an easy return down the line to your backhand, which is easier to do against this type of sidespin. This doesn't mean you don't ever do it short to the forehand, but it should mostly be as a variation unless the receiver struggles against it.

- **If you serve a right sidespin** (such as a backhand serve, tomahawk serve, or reverse pendulum serve), then the receiver will tend to return the ball to your forehand side, especially if you serve it to the forehand side, where it's awkward for many to go down the line, especially against this type of sidespin. This allows a relatively easy forehand attack. However, it also puts you on your forehand side, and so the opponent can block your attack to your backhand, taking away your forehand. It's for this reason that many forehand attackers prefer to attack out of the backhand side, and so tend to favor left sidespin serves. This type of sidespin is also effective to the middle, as it will usually still be returned toward your forehand side, but with less angle. It can also be served into the backhand, though many players find that sidespin to the backhand easier to handle than a sidespin that breaks away from them.
5. **Positioning After the Serve.** Where should you stand after your serve? There's a simple way of determining this. Imagine a somewhat aggressive return to your wide forehand. Stand as far over to your backhand side as you can where you can still just cover that wide forehand shot. If the receiver can make more than just a somewhat aggressive return to your wide forehand, then you need to position yourself to cover that – and more importantly, work on your serves so opponents can't attack them so easily.
 6. **Ready Stance.** Make sure after your serve you go into a ready stance where you are ready to move in either direction – weight on the balls of your feet, knees slightly bent, relatively wide stance. Flex your knees slightly as the receiver is hitting the ball as this will save you time in starting your movement. The key is to be ready for that first step, no matter which direction it is.
 7. **When to React.** Most players wait until they see where the receiver has hit the ball before moving. But you should move well before that – a receiver normally commits to a shot before contact. If you watch their swing when they receive, you can learn at what point you can see where they are going. Generally, by the time the receiver starts his forward swing you should be able to see where and what his return will be, and so should be moving into position to attack. Some players, mostly advanced ones, can disguise or change their shot or placement later in their shot, so watch out for that – but even they have to commit to a shot before contact.
 8. **How Hard to Attack.** Many players think that they need to rip the ball every chance. That's usually a mistake. Instead, look to make well-placed aggressive attacks that put pressure on the opponent (winning many points outright) and set you up for the next shot. If you see an easy winner, by all means take it, but focus on placement more than sheer speed. Against a heavy backspin, sometimes the best option is a very spinny, deep loop, which sets you up for the next shot. (The very slowness of your shot even gives you time to get into position for the next shot.) In general, there are two types of placements when you attack. If you see an open corner, that's where to go. Often opponents guard against the crosscourt, leaving themselves open to down the line attacks. Or they can only cover to the corner, leaving themselves open to more angled attacks. But assuming the opponent is in position and can cover the corners effectively, usually the best place to attack is right at the opponent's playing elbow. It forces them to make a split second decision between forehand and backhand, leading to many mistakes and weak returns, and it takes away any extreme angles for their returning, thereby allowing you to continue to attack, often with the forehand.
 9. **Follow Through Back into Position.** It's not enough to serve and forehand attack; you have to get back into position for the next shot. The key here is to follow through back into position. If you do a forehand from the wide forehand side, follow through back to your left. If you do a forehand from the wide backhand side, follow through back to your right. You may want to position yourself using the same positioning rule used for after your serve – as far to your backhand side as you can be while still covering a moderately aggressive return to your wide forehand.
 10. **Mentality.** If you want to have an effective serve and forehand attack game, you must have the right mentality for it. First, you must commit yourself to the idea that unless the receiver does something to stop it, you are going to serve and forehand attack. (This also applies to the two-winged attacker, who can commit to attacking from either side unless the receiver does something to stop it.) Second, understand that getting into position to attack with the forehand is more about proper preparation and reaction than foot speed. If you are in very bad physical condition, then you probably aren't going to be running around playing forehands all over the place, but if you are in reasonably good shape, you can at least do this at the start of a rally, especially after your serve.