

MDTTC News



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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, 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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Ongoing Programs

- **Beginning Junior Class.** This is for beginning juniors ages 6-13, with Coach Larry Hodges (with Rocky Wang, Raghu Nadmichettu, and John Hsu 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](#).
- **Private Coaching,** by Coaches Cheng Yinghua, Jack Huang, Larry Hodges, Wang Qing Liang, Chen Bo Wen, Rocky Wang, 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](#).

Help Raising Funds for MDTTC Junior Team Members: Starting Today Feb. 1 (ends Feb 24)

Junior team members are selling nice strong bags of various sizes and designs. ALL profits go to benefit these aspiring junior players directly. Short-term goal: the 2013 National Cadet and Junior teams
Long-term goal: the 2016 Olympics!

School Holiday Camp

The next School Holiday Camp is Monday, Feb. 18, 2013 For details: please [click here](#).

Butterfly MDTTC March Open

Our next tournament is March 2-3 - don't miss it! Taking over as the new tournament director will be Charlene Liu. For more info, see the [Tournament Page](#).

Spring Break Camp

This will take place March 25-29, during the local school Spring break. Hours are Mon-Fri, 10AM - 6PM. For more info on this, and on our upcoming **Summer Camps**, see the [Training Camp page](#).

Adult Beginning/Intermediate Class

This is for players roughly from beginning to 1500 level, taught by Coach Larry Hodges. (You will be paired up with players roughly your level.) The class will be ten Thursdays, 7:30-9:00 PM, for ten weeks starting Feb. 21 (no class on March 14). The class will cover all the basics - the strokes, footwork, serve, receive, tactics, and equipment. For more info, see the [info flyer](#), or [email Larry](#).

Adults (55+) Monday Morning Classes

Coach Rocky Wang runs these sessions for the more "mature" player. Mondays: 11 AM – 12:30 PM. 10 lesson passes offer the flexibility for players who may not make the class every week. Drop ins are welcome! For more info, see the [info flyer](#) or [email Rocky](#).

Physical Training for Serious Table Tennis Athletes

Want to get to the next level in table tennis? Off table training is essential! Coach Rocky Wang runs this 45-minute intensive training session Mondays 6:10-6:55 PM for **only \$10** per person per session. For more info, see the [Group Training Page](#) or [email Rocky](#).

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](#).

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, etc. Also see the [MDTTC web page](#) for regularly updated info.

TIP OF THE MONTH: Backhand Banana Flip

By Larry Hodges

The backhand flip has rapidly become the dominant receive against short serves at the world-class level. The flip (usually called a flick in Europe and Asia) is a short stroke where a player steps and attacks a short ball, forehand or backhand. What makes the backhand flip so dominant is that since the table is in the way, it is difficult to generate topspin against short balls except with the wrist, and it is easier to use wrist over the table with the backhand than the forehand. It was just a few years ago that players like China's Ma Long showed at tournaments, backhand flipping even short serves to the forehand, considered a no-no by most coaches for many years since it put you in an extreme backhand position and so not ready to dominate the table with the forehand on the next shot. Ma Long and others showed this wasn't true - they'd step back quickly and rip the next ball with their forehand.

This wasn't really new historically. Viktor Barna of Hungary won five World Men's Titles doing with a hardbat in the 1930s, often stepping around his forehand side to attack both short and long balls with his backhand. In the 1970s players like Tibor Klampar and Anton Stipanovic attacked short serves over and over with wristy and topspinny backhand flips.

However, players like Ma Long (world #1 for all of 2010 and eight months of 2011) and Zhang Jike (current World Men's Champion) have taken it to the next level in terms of the amount and variation of spin generated, and thereby its effectiveness. A major problem with a flip is that against a heavy backspin you need to lift the ball up, and to do so you need to generate upward racket speed. How do you do this when you can't backswing down against a short ball, because the table is in the way? By backswinging to the side, and using that swing to build up momentum to generate both topspin and sidespin on the flip. Because the stroke starts from the side and curves in toward the ball, the stroke's path is the shape of a banana, and so it is called a banana flip.

[Here's a video featuring Ma Long's banana flip](#) (3:25 long). There's Chinese commentary starting at 1:29, but you don't need that to see how he does the shot. Watch how he draws the racket off to the side and then essentially loops the ball with his wrist, often doing so against short balls to the forehand. Contact is a grazing motion, usually just after the top of the bounce against backspin, more at the top of the bounce against sidespin or topspin. Also note the placement of the shot - usually at wide angles, though aggressive ones can go at the opponent's middle (the elbow, the transition point between forehand and backhand).

The shot is especially effective when combined with short and long pushes against backspin serves (though can also do this against no-spin and sidespin serves, even topspin serves, by aiming low or even chopping down on the ball). At the higher levels, being able to flip aggressively or drop the ball short against short serves causes havoc with an opponent as they have to hang back to deal with the flip while moving in to handle the short push. If you just flip every ball, a good player knows the ball is coming out and can wait for it and loop or hit it far more easily. Mixing in deep pushes is also effective in messing up an opponent's timing.

A key aspect of the banana flip is that it also has sidespin, which messes with an opponent's timing. This is especially true if the incoming ball has sidespin that they can add to, such as against a forehand pendulum serve (if both players are righties or lefties). If both are righties, the incoming sidespin matches the sidespin from a banana flip, and so it's like looping against backspin, with the flip just adding to the topspin.

The best way to develop a banana flip is to (you guessed it) practice it. Find someone with good short serves, and have them serve over and over and you flip them. Ideally, have a bucket of balls so the server can just serve over and over, grabbing the next ball to serve without playing out the point. When the bucket is empty, pick up the balls and repeat. This is the best way to practice *all* types of receive, and yet few players do this, relying instead on practicing receive only in matches, which is like learning to hit drives and loops only by practicing them in matches. Not very smart. So get that bucket of balls and

practice your banana flips (and other receives), and maybe someday you'll dominate like Zhang Jike and Ma Long.