



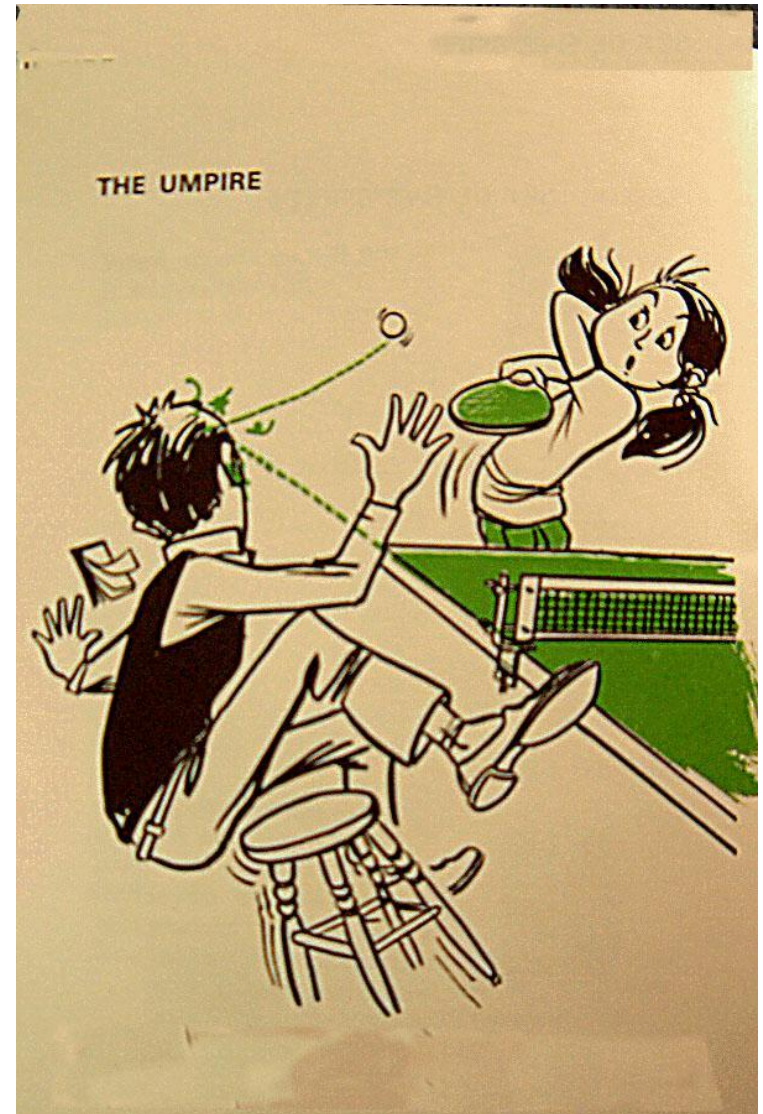
Level 1

Seminar for Umpires

Umpire

OOPS!

Umpires take a lickin', but keep on tickin'.



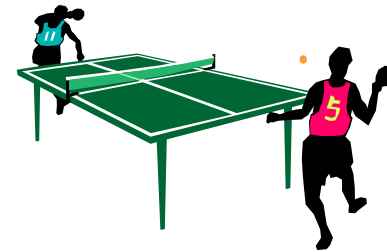
Chapter 2: The Laws of Table Tennis

- Equipment
- Definitions
- Service/return Laws
- Order of play
- A let
- A point
- A game/match
- Serving, receiving and ends
- Expedite system



2.1 The Table

- What is the table size?
- Does the table surface include the sides?
- Can the table be made of plastic?
- Can the colour be red?
- What is matt?
- What are the lines on the table?



- The table is 2.74m long, 1.525m wide and 76cm high
- The playing surface doesn't include the vertical sides of the table top
- The playing surface may be of any material. For Open and International competitions, the table must be ITTF approved, which is usually a table whose surface is made of pressed wood and is dark green or dark blue
- The playing surface must be uniformly dark coloured and matt
- The white side lines are 2cm wide along the 2.74m edge, and a white end line along each 1.525m edge. For doubles, each court is divided into two equal half courts by a white centre line, 3mm wide

2.2 The Net Assembly

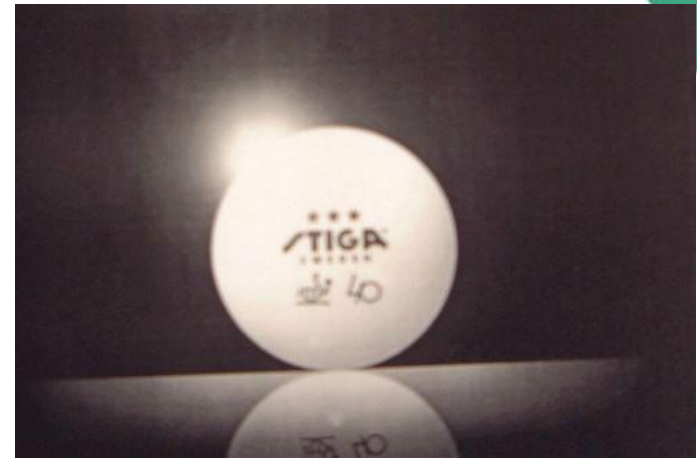


- Is the net post part of the net?
- How high is the net?
- How long is the net?
- What is the net cord?
- Must it be a cord?
- What colour is the net?

- The net post includes the net post and the clamps attaching them to the table; the ends of the net have to be attached to the post from top to bottom
- The net is 15.25cm high
- The net extends 15.25cm on both sides of the table, making it 30.5cm greater than the width of the table - in other words the net is 1.83m long
- The net cord is part of the net and is used to adjust the tension of the net
- It must be a cord
- The bottom of the net has to be as close as possible to the playing surface
- There is no specification as to the colour of the net in the Laws. However, it is usually the same colour as the table, dark green or dark blue, and usually has a white trim along its top length

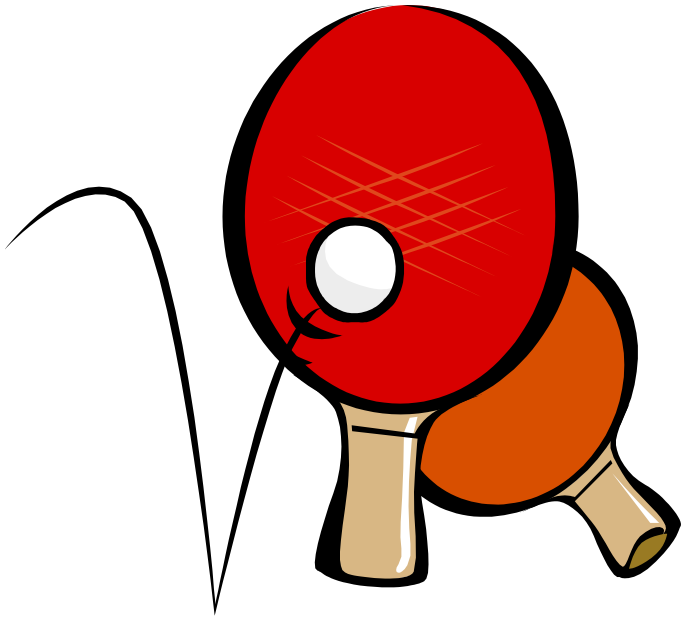
2.3 The Ball

- What is the diameter?
- What is the weight?
- What colour is it?
- How is the ball chosen for a match?
- Can you choose a ball not specified by the competition?



- The diameter of the ball is 40mm
- The weight is 2.7g
- The ball must be white or orange, and matt
- Usually players select at least one ball ;before the match begins; for Open and International competitions, ball selection is not done at the table, but at a designated area prior to players going to the table
- Two players cannot agree to play with a ball not specified in the entry form for a tournament

2.4 The Racket



- May I play with a small racket?
- Can the blade be made of plastic?
- What about carbon fibre?
- What is the allowable thickness of the adhesive layer?

- The racket can be any size or shape or weight
- At least 85% of the blade must be of natural wood
- An adhesive layer may be reinforced by carbon fibre or glass fibre or compressed paper
- The adhesive layer cannot be more than 7.5% of the total thickness or 0.35mm, whichever is the smaller

2.4 The Racket (...continued)

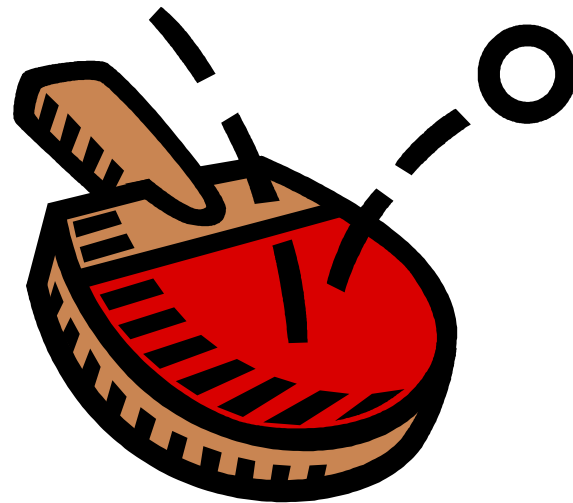
- What about the covering?
- And if it is not used for striking the ball?
- Sandwich rubber?
- Pimples rubber?
- Sandpaper?
- Colour?



- The covering must be ordinary pimpled rubber or sandwich rubber if the side is used for striking the ball
- If it is not used for striking the ball then the side must be bright red or black (the opposite colour of the striking side), and matt
- Sandwich rubber is a single layer of cellular rubber covered with a single layer of pimpled rubber (pimples in or out)
- Pimpled rubber is a layer of non-cellular rubber with pimples evenly distributed over its surface at a density of not less than 10 per cm² and not more than 30 per cm²
- Sandpaper cannot be used
- One side must be bright red and the other side must be black

2.4 The Racket (...continued)

- What if the rubber is “chewed” up along the edges?
- What if it is damaged during play?
- May I examine my opponent’s racket?



- If the rubber is “chewed up” along the edges, the umpire should refer the matter to the referee who will decide if it is acceptable to play with
- If the racket is damaged during play, the umpire may decide that the degree of damage will not affect play; however it is advisable to seek the decision of the referee
- At the beginning of a match and if, through accidental damage, a new racket is introduced, a player has the right to examine the opponent’s racket

2.5 Definitions

- Rally/in play
- Let/point
- Racket hand/free hand
- Strikes/obstructs
- Server/receiver
- End line/side line
- Wears/carries
- Umpire/Assistant
- Referee
- Stroke counter
- Time keeper
- “Time”
- “Fault”
- Partner

Section 2.5 of The Laws of Table Tennis
defines each of the terms listed

2.6 A Good Service



It takes less than a second to serve the ball and in that time there are about 31 things about which an umpire must be aware. Here are some of them . . .

2.6 A Good Service (...continued)



- What is the position of the ball in the free hand?
- Where must the free hand be before projecting the ball?
- Where must the racket be at the time that the ball is projected upwards?

- The ball must be stationary, resting freely on the open palm of the free hand
- The whole of the free hand doesn't need to be behind the end line or above the level of the playing surface, however the ball must be behind the end line and above the level of the playing surface
- There is nothing in the rules which indicate where the racket must be at the time the ball is projected upwards

2.6 A Good Service (...continued)

- Can the server throw the ball back towards the racket?
- How high must the ball be projected?
- Can the server spin the ball while throwing it up?
- Or strike it on the way up?
- In reference to the table, where must the ball be struck?



- The ball must be projected near vertically upwards; therefore, throwing it backwards towards the racket is a “fault”
- The ball must be projected at least 16cm or 6 inches (Hint: Use the height of the net as a reference)
- Spinning the ball while throwing it up is not permitted
- The ball in service must be struck as it is falling
- In service the ball must be struck behind the end line (or an imaginary extension of it) and above the level of the surface of the table

2.6 A Good Service (...continued)

- From the start of service until it is struck, the ball must be above the level of the surface of the table and behind the server's end line (or an imaginary extension of it)
- The ball must not be hidden from the receiver by any part of the body or clothing of the server or his/her doubles partner
- As soon as the ball has been projected, the server's free arm must be removed from the space between the ball and the net

2.6 A Good Service (...continued)

Doubles: Alan/Beth vs Xavier/Yvonne

What action should the umpire take? Why?

Alan serves the ball so that it first touches the right side of his court, then passes over the net without touching it, and then touches directly the receiver's left side of the table

Fault - the ball must touch directly the receiver's right side of the table

Doubles: Alan/Beth vs Xavier/Yvonne

What action should the umpire take? Why?

- a) Alan serves the ball so that it firsts touches the right side of his court, then it “nicks” the top of the net, and then touches directly, the receiver’s right side of the table
- b) Same as before, but now it touches directly, the receiver’s left side of the table

- a) Let - the umpire should immediately raise his/her hand and call “let”
- b) Fault - the ball did not touch the correct side

Singles: Alan vs Xavier

What action should the umpire take? Why?

- a) Alan serves the ball so that it first touches his side, and then passes over the net without touching it, and then touches directly Xavier's side of the table?
- b) Just as Alan projects the ball upward, Xavier turns his back to pick up a ball which had entered the court. Alan catches the ball instead of striking it.

- a) This is a good service - no action
- b) Let - the play was interrupted by a disturbance outside the control of the receiver; the fact that Alan caught the ball instead of striking it is also viewed as an interruption due to the same disturbance

Singles: Alan vs Xavier

What action should the umpire take? Why?

- a) Alan projects the ball upwards, but the umpire isn't satisfied that the service action is correct; there is no assistant umpire.
- b) What if, in the previous situation, there is an assistant umpire who is able to see Alan's actions?

- a) Let - then issue a warning because of a doubtful service. It is the player's responsibility to serve so that the umpire or assistant umpire can be satisfied that it is a good serve.
- b) No action - if there is an assistant umpire on the other side of the table, then they are able to decide if the service is good or not.

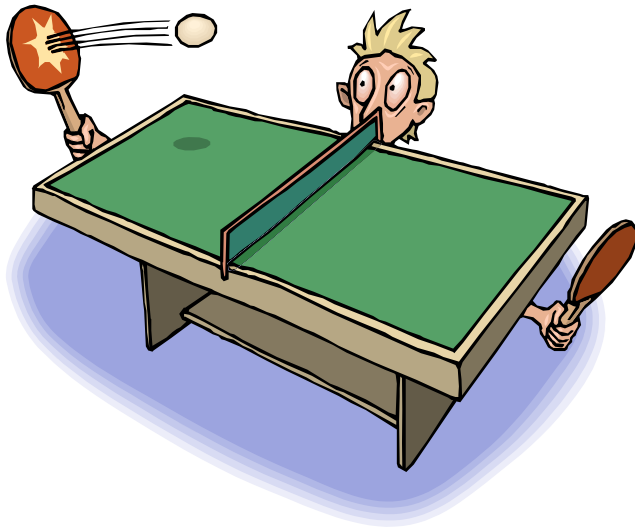
Singles: Alan vs Xavier

What action should the umpire take? Why?

- a) Alan is making a high toss serve. In tossing the ball upwards, it hits a cord supporting the lights, but Alan was still able to serve the ball correctly. Xavier does not make an effort to return the ball.
- b) Alan is serving and the umpire believes that the receiver cannot see the ball just as Alan strikes it. There is an assistant umpire.

- a) Fault - a point is awarded to Xavier once the ball touches the light cord
- b) Fault - the point is awarded to the receiver because the ball must be visible to the receiver at all times during the service action

2.7 A Good Return



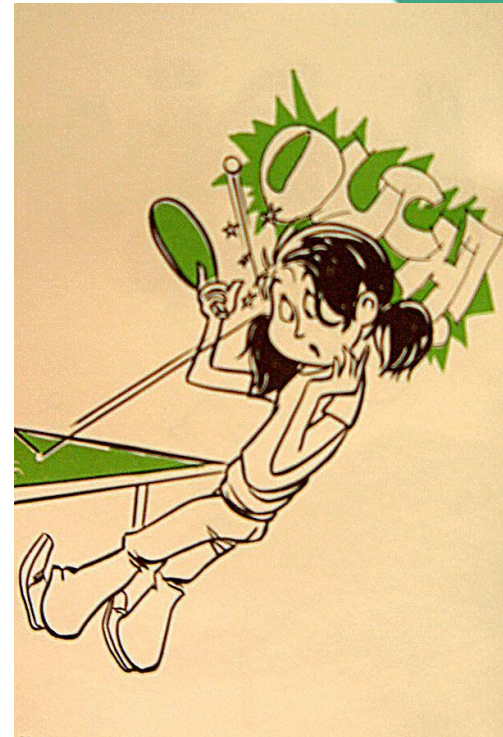
Xavier reaches low to make a return. The ball passes under the supports of the net which extends beyond the table, and it touches the top of Alan's court. This surprises Alan and he does not make an attempt to hit the ball. What action should be taken by the umpire? Why?

Point to Xavier - it is OK for the ball to pass under the supports of the net beyond the table; this is a good return and Alan then failed to make a good return

2.7 A Good Return (...continued)

What action should the umpire take? Why?

Beth attempts to return the ball, but misses it and it “hits” the top of her head behind the end line and then bounces back on Alan’s side of the table. Alan then misses the ball.



Point to Alan - Beth did not make a good return as she did not strike the ball with her racket

2.8 Order of Play

Doubles: Alan/Bill vs Xavier/Yves

What action should the umpire take? Why?

Alan serves first and Yves was the receiver. In a subsequent rally, Alan smashed the ball and Yves tried to return it but missed. Xavier made the return.



Point to Alan/Bill - Xavier struck the ball out of the sequence as determined by the first server/receiver in the rally

2.9 A Let

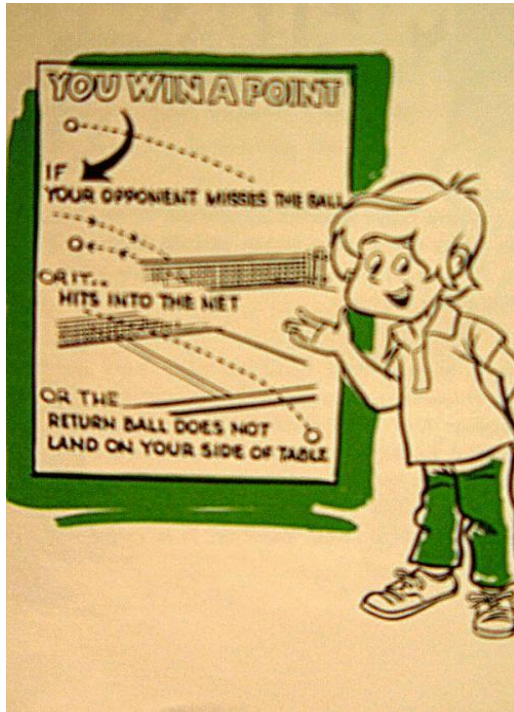
What action should the umpire take? Why?

- a) In a singles match, Beth vs Yvonne, Beth is serving. She serves the ball but Yvonne makes no attempt to return it. Yvonne tells the umpire that she was not ready.
- b) Beth and Yvonne are in a heated rally. The umpire sees a ball from an adjacent court enter the playing area, but neither player appear to see it.
- c) In the above situation, the assistant umpire sees the ball, but neither the players nor the umpire appear to see it. What should the assistant umpire do? Why?

- a) Let - since Yvonne did not attempt to return the ball, the umpire should give her the benefit of the doubt and declare the rally a let
- b) Let - even if neither player appears to see the ball entering the court, the umpire cannot be sure that they did not, and this is a disturbance outside of the control of the players
- c) Let - the Assistant Umpire can declare that conditions of play are disturbed in a way that may affect the outcome of a rally (3.3.2.5.4)

2.10 A Point

What action should the umpire take? Why?



Alan makes a lob return, but the ball hits a banner/flag high above the table. The ball still lands on Xavier's side. Xavier attempts to return it, but fails.

Point to Xavier - a point is awarded to Xavier as soon as Alan's return hits the banner

2.10 A Point (...continued)

What action should the umpire take? Why?

In making a good return, Xavier strikes the ball but his racket slips out of his hand and slides along the table and hits the net. Alan subsequently makes a good return but Xavier cannot play the shot since he does not have a racket.



Point to Alan - Alan wins a point if anything Xavier wears or carries at the start of the rally touches the net during the rally

2.10 A Point (...continued)

What action should the umpire take? Why?



Xavier is making a return, but the ball hits the back of his racket hand below the wrist. The ball then goes over the net and touches Alan's side of the table. Alan is so surprised, he makes no attempt to return the ball.

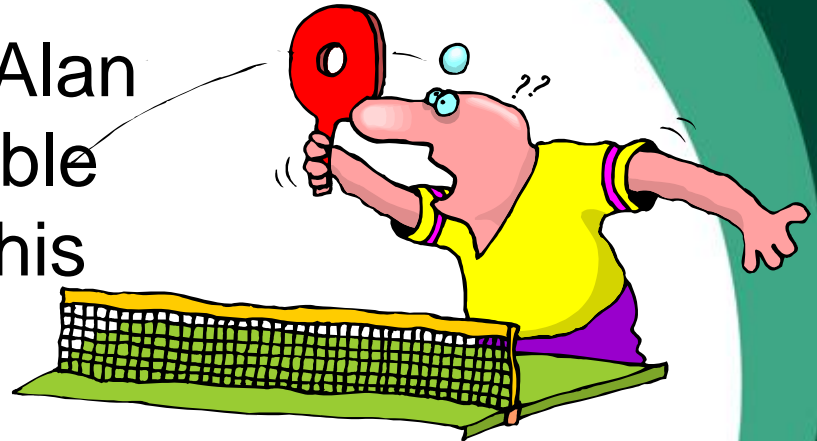
Point to Xavier - the return off the racket
hand below the wrist is a good return

2.10 A Point (...continued)

What action should the umpire take? Why?

a) Xavier lobs a return shot, Alan catches the ball over the table before it had crossed over his court

b) Xavier stretches to make a good return but to keep from falling he rests his free hand on the table



- a) Point to Xavier - Alan obstructed the ball
- b) Point to Alan - Alan wins the point as soon as Xavier's free hand touches the table

2.10 A Point (...continued)

What action should the umpire take?
Why?

Alan starts a game wearing a baseball cap. In the flurry of activity during a rally, his cap falls off and lands on the table. Xavier's return shot hits the cap and ricochets off the table without touching the table.

Point to Xavier - Alan was wearing the baseball cap at the beginning of the rally and it subsequently obstructed the ball

2.11 A Game

- A game normally consists of 11 points, but a player or pair shall win by at least 2 points
- A 1 minute time out may be called between rallies at any time during a game but only once within a match

2.12 A Match

- A match may be best of any odd number of games. e.g. 3 of 5
- A 2 minute warm-up is permitted before the first game of a match
- 1 minute is allowed between games

2.13 Choice of Serving, Receiving, and Ends

- At the start of the match, the umpire should toss a coin/disk to determine the right to choose
- Upon winning the toss, the player or pair has 2 choices
- To serve or receive first, then the opposing player or pair can choose an end
- To choose an end, then the opposing player or pair can choose to serve or receive first



2.13 Order of Play

Doubles: Alan/Beth vs Xavier/Yvonne

Alan serves first in the first game to Yvonne

- a) Can you predict who will be the first server in the second game?
- b) Can you predict who will be the first receiver in the second game?
- c) In the fifth and final game, Alan starts serving to Yvonne. When the score reaches 5-2, Xavier was serving to Alan and the players change ends. Who will be serving? Who will be receiving?

- a) The only prediction that can be made is that either Xavier or Yvonne will serve
- b) Not until Xavier and Yvonne decides which one will serve first; then the receiver will be determined by the order of play already established
- c) Xavier will continue to serve, but Beth becomes the receiver

2.14 Out of Order of Service, Receiving or Ends

Doubles: Alan/Beth vs Xavier/Yvonne

Beth served the first 2 points and is leading 2-0. She serves again and Yvonne returns the ball and a rally follows. The umpire then realises that Beth had served for a third time. What action should the umpire take? Why?

Let, since the rally is still in progress;
change the server to Yvonne, and the
score is now called 0-2

2.14 Out of Order (...continued)

What action should the umpire take?
Why?

Doubles: Alan/Beth vs Xavier/Yvonne

Beth served for the first 2 points and is leading 2-0. She serves again and Yvonne fails to return the ball. The score is now 3-0. Yvonne complains that she should have served that point.

Change the server to Yvonne; the point stands and the score is now 0-3

2.15 The Expedite System

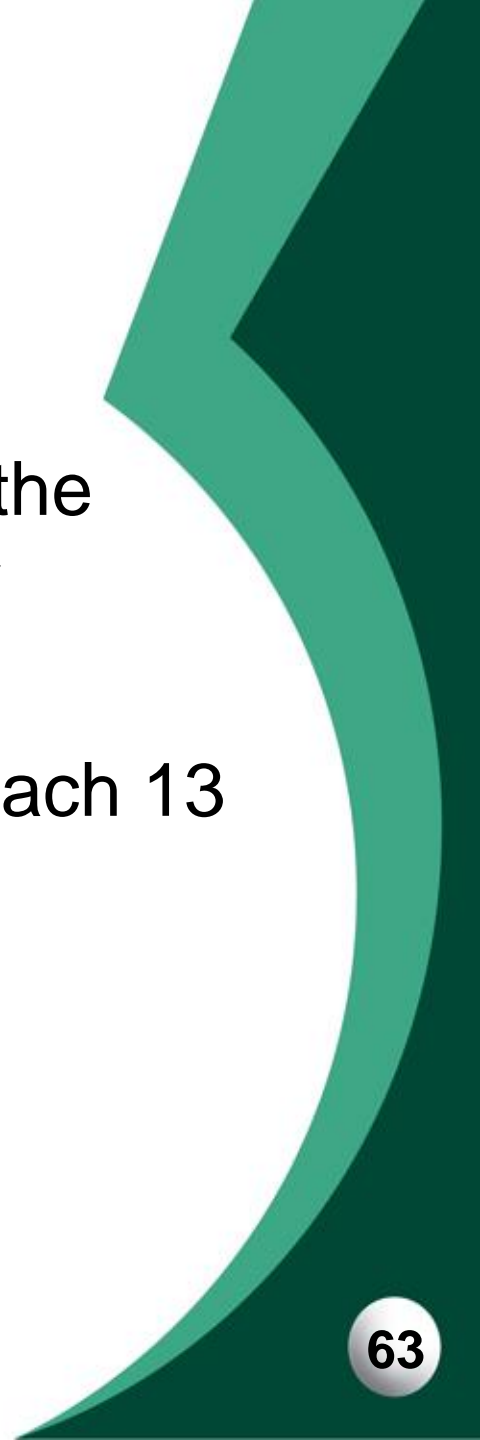
What action should the umpire take? Why?

- a) At 9-9 in the first game the umpire noticed that 10 minutes had just elapsed
- b) The first game finishes at 15-13 but it took 12 minutes to complete it
- c) Beth speaks only English and Yvonne speaks only French. The assigned stroke counter is unable to count in French and can only count in English

- a) No action – a total of 18 points had been scored so the expedite system is not introduced even though 10 minutes have already elapsed
- b) The next game is played normally – it is not played in expedite even though first one took more than 10 minutes
- c) If a language common to both players and the umpire cannot be agreed upon, the strokes must be counted in English

2.15 Expedite (...continued)

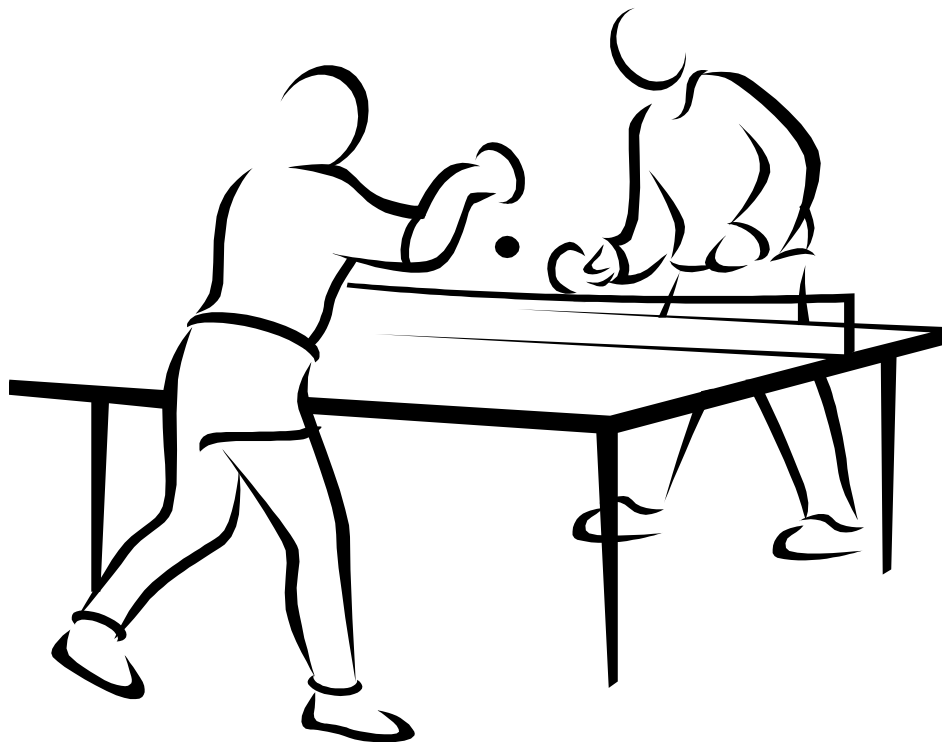
- a) Beth served first in the first game of a singles match, but Yvonne was serving when she won the first game at 15-13. Who will serve first in the second game?
- b) In a heated rally, the stroke counter reaches 12 while counting the strokes of the receiver. What action should the umpire take? Why?

- 
- a) Yvonne - the server is determined by the order of serving and receiving already established
 - b) No action - the stroke counter must reach 13

Acknowledgements...

- ITTF website
- ITTF Handbook for Match Officials
- ITTF Handbook
- “Table Tennis is Fun”... out of print

End of Level 1 Umpire Seminar





INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS FEDERATION
www.ittf.com