

Table Tennis

Value: Sport as a human right
Activity: Practicing Table Tennis skills

GENERAL GOAL

Students gain respect for the performance of athletes with different disabilities by taking part in adapted sport activities.

SPECIFIC GOALS

- To create understanding and awareness that persons with a disability have the opportunity to play Table Tennis.
- To experience specific Table Tennis and Showdown (see page 2) skills using different positions.
- To gain respect for the sport abilities of Table Tennis players.
- To become aware of the game modifications and the rules of adapted Table Tennis and Showdown.

ENVIRONMENT

An indoor sports hall, large enough for the number of tables that will be used. In an ideal situation, all Showdown tables are well separated and placed in a quiet environment.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

- Table Tennis: tables, rackets and balls, wheelchairs/chairs.
- Showdown: Showdown table (see page 2), two rackets per table, small bell balls, glove for the batting hand (optional).

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE ACTIVITY

Session leader, assistants and athletes (if available).

STARTING THE ACTIVITY

The session leader introduces adapted Table Tennis to the students. He/she explains that persons with a disability are able to play Table Tennis with small adaptations. He/she will also introduce the sport Showdown. This game is played on a table and therefore has similarities with Table Tennis. Showdown is a fast-moving sport originally designed for but not limited to individuals with blindness/visual impairment. Sighted people and persons with other disability types (e.g., intellectual disability) find showdown to be challenging when using eyeshades. If possible, an athlete demonstration of the game would be useful at this point.





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RUNNING THE ACTIVITY

- The session leader allocates tables to the students and ensures that everyone can play both Table Tennis and Showdown. If the groups are large, Table Tennis can be performed as doubles.
- For Table Tennis, the session leader encourages the students to play Table Tennis in and out of the chair/wheelchair and to compare the level of difficulty when playing from seated and standing position.
- Showdown is a relatively easy activity for students to learn. The object of the game is to strike the ball off the sidewall, along the table, under the centre screen, and into the opponent's goal. The bells within the ball indicate the location of the ball during the play. The first player to reach eleven points, leading by two or more points, is the winner. Each player serves five times in a row. A player scores two points for a goal and one point when their opponent hits the ball off the table or into the screen in the middle of the table, or touches the ball with anything but the bat. These are the official rules, but it is the session leader's responsibility to make the activity appropriate to the developmental level of the age group participating (see guidelines for younger/older participants).

showdown table:



Photo © Jonas Ekströmer



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GUIDELINES FOR ADAPTATION TO YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS

- Avoid focusing on the rules too much, let the students have fun!
- Use larger, lighter balls and/or adjust the height of the chairs (e.g., add cushions, place chairs on mats) for Table Tennis.

GUIDELINES FOR ADAPTATION TO OLDER PARTICIPANTS

- Keep scores during actual game play.
- Develop the activity as a tournament/competition.

REFLECTION

In order to reach the desired goals of this activity, it is extremely important that in the reflection process, the session leader emphasizes the challenges of the activity. Through a group discussion, the session leader directs the conversation towards the realization that only through precision and skill can persons with a visual/motor impairment can practice a challenging sport like Table Tennis or Showdown.

Sample Questions

- How did you feel playing Table Tennis? What was most difficult?
- What are some of the differences between standing and seated Table Tennis?
- How would you describe Showdown?
- Would it be easy to become an elite Table Tennis player?
- What skills and abilities must one gain to become an elite wheelchair Table Tennis player?
- What difficulties might these players face in daily life? How might they overcome these difficulties?

interesting facts

- There are ten disability classes that compete in Paralympic Table Tennis. Classes T1 to T5 compete in wheelchairs and classes T6 to T10 compete standing.
- Athletes with tetraplegia often tape the racket to their hand as they are unable to grip it with their fingers.
- Paralympic Table Tennis uses the same rules as the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) with some minor modifications for wheelchair athletes.
- For wheelchair play, the area of the table may be reduced, but shall be not less than 8m long and 7m wide.



The official rules of Table Tennis can be found at www.ipptc.org.

LINKS

Website: www.paralympic.org/release/Summer_Sports/Table_Tennis
PSD Manual: Section Two, Chapter 8

Did you know...?

Table Tennis has been played at the Paralympic Games since the first Paralympics in Rome in 1960!

