

file: TCTTL--FAQ for Prospective Members.docx
(updated 2023Jan25--by Joe G)

There is a separate FAQ for **NEW** members, [here](#).

How do I contact the club?

Email us at TCTTL-officers

Do I have to be a 3M employee to play in the League?

Definitely not; the League (named TCTTL) split from 3M about 2022Aug..

Past/old affiliation was with 3M; stopped that affiliation about 2022Aug.—3M hadn't provided financial assistance for many years prior to 2022. New name is TCTTL (Twin Cities Table Tennis League).

Where and when do you play?

We lease gym space from CCACS (Capital City Adventist Christian School), in Maplewood -- 5 minutes south of intersection of I-94 & McKnight Rd. You can get directions [here](#). We play most Thursday nights, September through May. The gym opens for practice at 6:15pm, play begins at 7pm, and ends between 9:30 - 10:30pm. Players have the option to continue practice hitting after any League night play ends—no specific closing time.

How does the League work?

It is a lot like a bowling or golf league. We have 8 teams, 6 players per team. Because of the size of the gym & how League is organized, 48 regular players is the max we can accommodate; with the option for additional REG Team players, if 2 people want to split the fee for 1 REG Team position & each play only half the time as a REG Team player (and not on the same night) – those 2 players are then designated as H-P (half-player) positions, A & B, on a Team and function as a single player for any Weekly Team-play in the League (except, during PlayOffs and Tournaments, they are then considered individual League players).

We play most Thursday nights, September through April. Playoffs are in May. The top 4 teams make the playoffs. There are also Singles and Doubles tournaments. Trophies are awarded. There is a year-end banquet.

Only 4 players from a team are scheduled to play, any given Thursday. There will be 2 singles matches, then 2 doubles matches, then 2 more singles matches. Each player's wins and losses contribute to the team win-loss record.

I'm worried I'm not good enough

That's the beauty of the handicap system. Again, much like golf or bowling, it is a tremendous equalizer. Strong players feel like they have to be razor-sharp, otherwise a few mistakes, a few lucky breaks, and they have lost quickly. This makes the game interesting and challenging for the strong player. Weaker players, on the other hand, even though outmatched, have a good chance. This challenges the weaker player to really focus on their strengths, and rather than feeling bad about losing many points, feel good about finding a way to pick up a few points, which along with their handicap, may be the margin of victory. I too was skeptical when I first heard about it, but combined with team play, it is a great system.

How does the handicap system work?

The handicap differential is centered on 0. So suppose I am playing someone who is +15 against me. That does not mean I start at 15-0. It means we start at 8 to -7. So the weaker player will have a big lead, but the stronger player does have time to dig out. The max differential is 20. So any player who has played enough table tennis to feel they are a competent casual player will probably fit within the range. It's a great system!

Then, handicaps are re-calculated each week. If your singles result is 2-2, then your handicap doesn't change. If you go 3-1 or 1-3, it goes up or down by 1. If you go 4-0 or 0-4, then it adjusts by 2. It doesn't take many good or bad weeks for your handicap to reach an equilibrium.

Is there a maximum handicap?

There is a maximum. Most casual "basement" or "garage" players will come in under the maximum. We do reserve the right to decline a player who exceeds the maximum--but this is pretty unusual, please don't let it deter you from checking out the league.

I sometimes have activities on Thursday nights

Not a problem. First of all, there are 6 per team, and only 4 people play any given night. So that is a lot of flexibility right there. But then also subs are readily available. Subs are easily found, even with only hours' notice.

How much does it cost?

The league cost is \$125. This covers everything during the League season, except the banquet, which is subsidized, but has a \$5 fee. Summer is separate--see below.

What about summer?

League play adjourns for the summer, but we have drop-in practice and play every Thursday. The cost is \$5 per night or a one-time fee of around \$20 (TBD). It is drop-in each week, so no scheduling commitment is required. Gym will usually be open around 6:30 (7:00 at latest).

Can I try it out?

The summer is a great time to check things out. It will give you a little flavor of the league and setup, and a chance to talk to members. Otherwise, we have a few practice-only nights sprinkled throughout the calendar, where it is possible to drop-in. If you really want to see things beforehand, please contact league President Erik Neu (erik.neu@gmail.com), and he will arrange a special tour.

I play seriously, but I'm not that competitive

You will find that the league is the perfect amount competitive. People take their game reasonably seriously, and try hard to play their best and improve their game, and win for their team. But the minute the game is over, players shake hands and move on. I don't think anyone in our league ever goes home angry at themselves for their play.

I'm interested, but can I try being a sub?

Absolutely. We have a regular need for subs. The sub fee is \$25 for the season. This includes eligibility for all 4 tournaments, and subsidized attendance at the banquet.

How does subbing work?

The key to playing often as a sub is to be on top of your email. When a team needs a sub, an email is sent out to everybody in the league, Regular Members and Official Subs. Official Subs have 24 hours to respond, first-come, first-served. If no Official Sub responds, then members from other teams can volunteer to sub. Again, first-come, first-served. It is almost never a problem, even with last-minute requests.

If the sub request goes out the day of game time, then the first player to respond, Official Sub or Regular Member, is selected.

I'm really interested, but I see the season has already started. It is possible to still join?

It may be possible. Sometimes we lose players mid-year, for various reasons, and have openings. Membership will be pro-rated. So it is well-worth checking! Also, subs can always join mid-year.

Club Communications

Club communications are generally through email. So you will want to check your email at least daily. .

Is it adults-only?

Membership is almost all adults. Occasionally we have had a high-school age player. Students are certainly welcome. Below age 16 will be considered, but will be at the discretion of the league.

Where can I get a decent paddle?

Even a very inexpensive custom paddle will be superior to what you can buy at a general sporting goods store. There are various mail-order suppliers, one is Paddle Palace. Describe your game, and they will suggest something. You can probably get a fine paddle for \$50, certainly well under \$100.