



## Rules for Season 2018/2019

### 1. General

1.1. Unless stated otherwise all competitive play will be played in accordance with ETTU and ITTF rules and regulations.

1.2. All league matches and tournaments may be subject to MTTA supervision but any appeals or protests must be sent by registered mail together with a protest fee of Euro 15 to the secretary of the MTTA at P.O.Box 133, Valletta, followed by an email to the secretary and assistant secretary. All this must be done within 48 hours of the incident in question.

1.3. In the event of disputes the decision of the MTTA committee will be final.

1.4. If a protest has been judged by the committee to be correct, the MTTA will refund the Euro 15 protest fee to the player or club voicing the protest.

1.5. Only playing equipment, authorized by the ITTF, may be used, (link)  
<https://www.ittf.com/handbook>  
Handbook. The **rules & regulations** of the **ITTF** can be found in the **ITTF** Handbook of 2017.

1.6. Any suspected infringement relating to the use of playing equipment should be reported to the MTTA, in writing, which will then decide on what action to take. This action may include, but not be limited to, imposing a fine, deduction of ranking points or expulsion.

1.7. Any specially organized international tournaments or events, any MTTA endorsed events will be "closed" events, where participating players must be fully paid-up members of the MTTA.

1.8. All matches shall be played with 40 mm \*\*\*plastic Balls as permitted by the ITTF.

1.9. The MTTA has the right to ban any player or team from participating in any event organized by it, if such player or team has outstanding membership, tournaments or league fees or fines. Such ban may be permanent or temporary.

1.10 An anti-doping rule in individual sport in connection with an In-Competition test automatically leads to Disqualification of the result obtained in that Competition with all resulting consequences, including forfeiture of any titles, medals, computer ranking points.

**Players, and only Players, are responsible for what goes into their body (the “strict liability” principle)!**

Follow link

<https://www.ittf.com/anti-doping/inadvertent-doping/>

## **2. League Rules for the Malta National Table Tennis League**

**2.1.** Unless stated otherwise matches shall be played in accordance with ETTU and ITTF rules and regulations and always in accordance with MTTA regulations.

**2.2.** A single team can register to play without being affiliated to a club or table tennis academy. However, the listed owner of a team is responsible for the payment of all fees and possible fines that are incurred by any team that he/she has committed to enter and to also ensure that the team/s and their players abide by MTTA, ETTU and ITTF rules and regulations.

**2.3.** Clubs or table tennis Academies may consist of one or more teams. Clubs/table tennis academies with several teams must name those teams with a unique name after their club/Table tennis academies name, although the names of the individual teams can also incorporate the name of the same or different sponsors.

**2.4.** Clubs/Table Tennis Academies or teams may register as many players as they like for each team, but there must be a minimum of three (3) players registered per team. The appropriate registration forms of the season concerned are to be filled in and signed by all concerned. All players must be registered at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to their first league match.

**2.5.** To be eligible to play for a team in the league a player must in all cases be a fully paid-up individual member of the MTTA (please see 2.6.). Non-Maltese Nationals can play in the Malta National League as long as they provide a current Maltese ID card. EU nationals can also register to play without providing a Maltese ID card but only up to the 1st March 2018 after which date no further registrations would be possible unless they have a Maltese ID card. To make things perfectly clear a Non-EU national must always provide a current Maltese ID card to qualify. If these conditions are met there is no limitation on the number of foreign players a team may 'field'. Please note that all registrations of any kind must be done at least 72 hours prior to the commencement of the 2nd round of the particular division the team is playing in.

**2.6. Any player may transfer from one team to another within the same academy only if the player has not played in any league match of that particular season and prior to the commencement of the 2nd round. Transfers within the same academy MUST be affected from lower to higher or in same division.**

**Transfers from one academy to another can only be effected prior to the commencement of the second round. If a player presenting the request for a transfer, an Independent Transfers Board will be appointed at a cost of 200 euros. The transfer fee of the player may vary from free to the sum of 400 euros, according to the genuinity of the case which will be heard and determined through the said board.**

**Only one transfer per season is allowed per player.**

**Such registrations must be completed 72 hours before he/she can play for the new team, and the fee of 20 euros as an additional player to the team has to be paid again.**

**These rules are only to be applied during the table tennis season of the said year. A player can transfer freely when the season is finished and prior to the commencement of a new season.**

**2.7.** All league matches shall be played either Monday or Friday evenings, unless otherwise instructed by the MTTA.

**2.8.** The venue for league matches shall be The University Gymnasium, Maria Teresa Spinelli Street, Gzira or any premises approved by the MTTA.

**2.9.** It will be the responsibility of the players representing the teams concerned to erect and dismantle the table and other equipment linked to their encounter. This applies to both home and away team. Failure to comply with this rule will lead to disciplinary action.

**2.10.** Three (3) points will be awarded for a league win, one (1) point for a loss and two (2) points will be deducted when a team gives a walkover. (A team walkover being when not even one (1) player of a team attends to play just one (1) opponent for one (1) point)

**2.11.** Promotion, relegation, honors will be decided by the number of league points scored. In the case of a tie the direct encounters will be used to separate, if there is still a tie a play-off match will be played.

**2.12.** Teams/Clubs cannot postpone matches under any circumstances. By a majority vote of the MTTA executive committee the MTTA can postpone matches in the unlikely event that matches have clashed with a players' MTTA, MOC, Special Olympics, ITTF, or ETTU participation. In order for the MTTA executive committee to vote on such a postponement it is the responsibility of the players/officials/teams concerned to write to the MTTA asking for the postponement. This should be done at least three (3) weeks in advance allowing time for a decision to be made. If the player has been notified less than the 3 weeks the committee will allow his/her notification.

**2.13.** (REMOVED)

**2.14.** A team that gives three consecutive walkovers will be scratched from the league.

**2.15.** Division 1 is comprised of 10 teams. The teams finishing in the last two (2) positions (9th and 10th place) will be relegated to Division 2.

**2.16.** Division 2 is comprised of 10 teams. The teams finishing in the first two (2) positions (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) will be promoted to division 1 whilst the last two (2) positions (9th and 10th place) will be relegated to Division 3

**2.17.** Division 3 is comprised of ten (10) teams, with the top two (2) teams being promoted to Division 2 and the last two (2) teams being relegated to Division 4.

**2.18.** In the case of Division 4 which consists of eight (8) teams. Teams finishing in top two (2) positions will be promoted.

**2.20.** A player with an intellectual or physical disability shall have the right to request that the order of play be altered. Should the athlete/s choose to exercise this right the opposing team will have to comply with this request.

### **3. Match Rules (Malta National T.T. League)**

#### **Matches will be played with the following system:**

**3.1.** Each match shall consist of scheduled nine (9) singles sets. The three nominated singles players of one team will all play the three nominated players of the other, making the nine singles sets.

**3.2.** In any league match, a team shall normally consist of three (3) players, but can contain a minimum of one (1) player. Teams that 'field' less than the normal three (3) will forfeit the sets and points not played by the absent player/players.

**3.3.** The sets will comprise of the best of five (5) games. Using the ITTF 11 point system.

**3.4.** The order of play shall be as follows:

1st A Vs X, 2nd B Vs Y, 3rd C Vs Z  
4th B Vs X, 5th A Vs Z, 6th C Vs Y  
7th B Vs Z, 8th C Vs X, 9th A Vs Y  
(see score sheet)

**3.5.** Unless one of the teams is fielding players with a disability any change to this order of play must be:

A. With the agreement of both teams,

B. PRIOR to the commencement of the match; and

C. Only when the three single players of a team asking for any change have been nominated. It is not permissible for a team to make prior arrangements with their opponents for a different schedule of play whilst keeping their players anonymous.

**3.6.** The gym shall be available from 19:00 for the setting up of tables and matches are scheduled to commence at 19:30 which includes the usual fifteen (15) minutes 'grace' period. However at 19:30 (absolute latest) at least one player from a team must be present in the playing court where his team match is to be played and ready to commence play. If it is in fact the case that only one player from a team is present at 19:30, then he/she must be scheduled to play A or X so that the match may start. Should a team fail to have at least one player in the

appropriate court by 19:30, the opposing side can claim a walkover. Both teams detailing the players must complete the score sheet for the match involved in the encounter and the order of play, PRIOR to the commencement of the match. Once players have been scheduled on the score sheet, the score sheet may not be altered without the full agreement of both teams.

**3.7.** Any match where play has not commenced by 19:30 will be deemed either (A) as a walkover to one of the teams concerned, supported by a completed score sheet or (B) to be NULL and VOID. It is not permissible for the two teams to agree to start later than 19:30. MTTA committee members will make sure that this rule is adhered to.

**3.8.** At any time after 21:30, due to the strict timings being imposed on the committee, a MTTA committee member may invoke the following rule. If any match appears to be running late and may not finish early enough to pack-up and vacate the premises in time (23:45). Providing that there are spare tables available, then teams must agree to play any remaining sets on more than one table. A player cannot refuse to do this on any grounds. In the event that the premises have to be vacated, and the match is unfinished, any remaining sets will be deemed "null and void".

**3.9.** After the end of the initial grace period (19:30) all players must be ready to play his, her set, when it is scheduled. There are no further 'grace' periods. Should the late player/s miss their turn in the schedule of play, the set is awarded as a walkover to the opponent. The match then proceeds to the next scheduled encounter. A late player may play any sets that he/she is still in time to play, but once a set has been awarded to an opponent as a walkover, it may NOT be rescheduled. Should both players in an encounter not be present, the set is to be marked on the score sheet as Null and Void. The match then continues, where it can, following the order of play.

**3.10.** All possible sets must be played.

**3.11.** The warming up time before each set is limited to two (2) minutes. The time allowed for changing between games is one (1) minute. Towels can only be used after each six points, or at change of ends. Once a set commences a player cannot change the bat he/she is playing with, which must be in full view of the umpire at all times, unless it is irreparably damaged.

**3.12.** It is the responsibility of the Home Team captain to ensure that the match score sheet is completed properly and signed by both team captains. This can then be forwarded to the League Organizer or placed in the letter box which has been installed in the area where the table tennis tables are stored. The League Organizer may be contacted via email  
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**3.13.** In the event of a walkover the team claiming the walkover must still complete the score sheet. If for some reason a score sheet is missing, the League Organizer will contact team captain the home team concerned and then, in the event that the score sheet cannot be found within 5 days, the match will be marked as NULL AND VOID for both league and ranking purposes.

**3.14.** Playing clothing shall consist of a short-sleeved or sleeveless shirt and shorts or skirt or one-part sports outfits, socks and playing shoes; other garments, such as part or all of a track

suit, shall not be worn during play except with the permission of the referee  
The main colour of a shirt, skirt or shorts, other the main colour of a shirt, skirt or shorts, other different from that of the ball in use.

**3.15.** Three official balls (White 40mm<sup>\*\*\*</sup>) will be provided to each team by the MTTA. Additional balls may be purchased from the MTTA.

**3.16.** While any league match is being played, only the 4 registered players and the team captain can sit on the bench a total of 5 persons.  
All supporters and non-members of the MTTA may sit and support clubs and team mates from the stands.

## **4. Player Ranking**

**4.1.** As in previous seasons a player ranking system will be in force.

**4.2.** To take part in the Senior, Under 21, 18, 15, 13 or Under 11 ranking events a player must be a MTTA member, therefore any player who is not a MTTA member will not be part of these ranking systems.

**4.3.** The starting positions of the 2017/18 senior ranking list will be based on the positions of the Final Ranking List of the 2016/17 season. Any Non-MTTA members may be removed.

**4.4.** All National League matches and any play-off matches will count towards player ranking.

## **5. Tournaments**

Various tournaments will be held throughout the season. There will be at least three ranking tournaments, which will be run as per ranking regulations. Others will be conducted as per terms and regulations specified at the time of invitation.

## **6. Nationals**

As last year senior and junior national championships are planned to be run separately.

## **7. Junior Ranking**

As last year there will be Under 11, Under 13, Under 15 (Cadets), Under 18 (Juniors) and Under 21 ranking lists. These ranking lists run separately to the senior-ranking list and are based on the Junior ranking tournament results held throughout the season. The starting ranking lists for these categories for season 2017/18 will be based on the final ranking lists of the 2016-17 season where applicable. For this season junior age groups are; born 2007 or later for under 11, born 2005 or later for under 13, born 2003 or later for under 15, born 2000

or later for under 18, born 1997 or later for under 21.

## **8. SOME CLARIFICATIONS**

### **8.1. EQUIPMENT**

**8.1.1.** Tables, umpire desks, nets and scores boards are the property of the association any damages done by any member or supporters are to be paid for in full, the equipment will be replaced and paid for by the person/s responsible.

**8.1.2.** Tables and all equipment are to be assembled and put away by the players and coaches taking part in any tournament or league matches. It is a condition of entry for both league and tournaments.

**8.1.3.** Tournaments will not start until all tables are assembled

**8.1.4.** Training tables are also the responsibility of the players using them. Any player that uses the training table is responsible to put away the table and other equipment when finished.

**8.1.5.** A record of who is using tables is to be kept, if your table is passed to others then you as player must ensure that the record is changed, you are responsible until the table is put away.

**8.1.6.** At the MTTA discretion, disciplinary action will be taken against those abusing the above, these actions may include but are not limited to the following: -

- Suspending the player / team

- Enforcing fines.

- If tables are left up after National League or Team Grand Prix matches, both teams concerned will be fined Euro 40.00 each.

**8.1.7.** Players will then not be allowed to play or practice unless they have paid the fine and/or the suspension is over.

## **9. PLAYER CLOTHING**

**9.1.** Playing clothing shall normally consist of a short-sleeved or sleeveless shirt and shorts or skirt or one-part sports outfits, socks and playing shoes.

Other garments, such as part or all of a track suit, shall not be worn during play except with the permission of the referee.

**9.2.** The main color of a shirt, skirt, or shorts, other than sleeves and collar of a shirt shall be clearly different from that of the ball in use.

**9.3.** Clothing may bear numbers or lettering on the back of the shirt to identify a player club, and advertisements.

If the back of a shirt bears the player's name, this shall be situated just below the collar. Advertisements on the centre part of the back of a shirt; such numbers shall be contained within a panel having an area not greater than 600cm<sup>2</sup>.

**9.4.** Any markings or trimming on the front or side of a playing garment and any objects such as jewelry worn by a player shall not be so conspicuous or brightly reflecting as to insight an opponent.

**9.5.** Clothing shall not carry designs or lettering which might cause offence or bring the game into disrepute.

**9.6.** Any of the legality or acceptability of playing clothing shall be decided by the referee.

## **10. BEHAVIOUR DURING MATCHES**

The following behavior is deemed to be unacceptable.

Players and coaches or other advisers shall refrain from behavior that may unfairly affect an opponent, offend spectators, or bring the sport into disrepute, such as abusive language, deliberately breaking the ball or hitting it out of the playing area, kicking the table or surrounds and disrespect of match officials.

**10.1.** Any form of aggressive action within the gym.

**10.2.** Any form of theft or attempted theft

**10.3.** Leaving a tournament without umpiring a match after losing. (Besides possible fines any player reported by the tournament referee will result in the deduction of 5% of that players ranking points, persistent offenders will also be suspended).

**10.4.** In an individual event, only one coach is allowed for each player or pair. In a team event, only the team players and their respective coach are allowed within the playing area. All other supporters are to sit in the respective stand. All authorized persons within the playing area are to be seated as directed by the match official.

**10.5.** If at any time a player, a coach or another adviser commits a serious offence the umpire shall suspend play and report immediately to the MTTA OFFICIAL. For less serious offences the umpire may, on the first occasion, hold up a yellow card and warn the offender that any further offence is liable to incur penalties. ALL UMPIRES TO HAVE RED AND YELLOW CARDS.

The person controlling the game will ask an official of the MTTA or an official umpire of the ITTF to write a report and take a decision on the spot,

**10.6.** For the 1st serious offence a € 50.00 fine will be imposed.

**10.7.** For the 2nd serious offence by the same player within the same season a further fine of €100.00 will be imposed plus the player will be suspended for 2 matches and/or tournaments.

**Note:** Depending on the seriousness of the offence the match official has the right to suspend the player and ask him/her to leave the playing area immediately disallowing further play. (If the offence takes place in a league match the interpretation is enforced for the same national league)

## 11. Ranking points

**11.1.** Before a new season starts, long-term inactive players are removed and new players are added in order of application (newcomers start with a total of **100 points**).

**11.2.** The ranking is then *normalised* (see 12 below).

**11.3.** The winner is awarded **10%** of the opponent's points if the opponent is **better** ranked, and **5%** if the opponent is **not**. If the opponent has an **equal** amount of points, **10%** are awarded.

**11.4.** In the plate event, points are awarded **5%** and **2.5%** of opponent's total respectively.

**11.5.** If the opponent gives a **walkover**, the winner is awarded **5%** of the opponent's total.

**11.6.** Players who give a walkover without a satisfactory explanation are deducted **5%** of their total points.

**11.7.** All encounters are based on the latest update of the ranking list.

**11.8.** Points won in the league also add up to the seniors ranking; **10%** and **5%** for games won in the first division, and **8%** and **4%** for games won in lower divisions.

## 12. Normalization

The ranking is normalized as follows:

**12.1.** All the points from the end of the previous season are reduced by 100 points.

**12.2.** The points are then divided by a factor which shrinks the first player's points to 400.

**12.3.** The obtained values are increased by 100 points resulting in the first player with 500 points and the last player with 100 points.

**12.4.** This method does not affect the majority of the players since the points are divided by a common factor, however it does give a slight advantage to newcomers. The normalization is done to reduce the gap between the first and last place, and to ensure that this gap is always 400 points (or less) at the start of the season.

## **13. Seeding**

### **13.1. Seniors**

**13.1.1** The Top **16 players** are seeded (if only 14 of the first 16 players enter, the 17th and 18th player are drawn as the 15th and 16th seed).

**13.1.2** Seedings are done in accordance to International standards (i.e. 1st and 2nd seed, 3-4, 5-8 and 9-16 drawn by ballot).

**13.1.3** The rest of the players are placed in a **qualifier round** and drawn at **random**.

**13.1.4** The 2nd round (i.e. a qualifying winner against a seeded player) is also drawn by ballot.

### **13.2. Juniors**

**13.2.1.** The Top **4 players** are seeded (if only 3 of the first 4 players enter, the 5th player is drawn as the 4th seed). If the tournament has 24 or more entries, **8 players** are seeded.

**13.2.2.** Seedings are done in accordance to International standards (i.e. 1st and 2nd seed, 3-4 and 5-8 drawn by ballot).

**13.2.3.** The rest of the players are placed in a **qualifier round** and drawn at **random**.

**13.2.4.** An exception for the Under 11 categories where the tournament has a **group stage** instead of a qualifier round if tournament includes **less than 16 players**.

**13.2.5.** The 2nd round (i.e. a qualifying winner against a seeded player) is also drawn by ballot.

## **14. Racket control**

**14.1.** The racket may be of any size, shape or weight but the blade shall be flat and rigid. The racket covering shall be used without any physical, chemical or other treatment.

**14.2.** The surface covering the blade must be black on one side and red on the other, no other colour is allowed.

**14.3.** The rubber must be intact and properly stuck to the blade all surface equal in flatness. The surface of the covering material on a side of the blade, or of a side of the blade if it is left uncovered, shall be matt, bright red on one side and black on the other.

**14.4.** The racket covering used must be approved for use by the ITTF as per their latest/current official list.

**14.5.** The blade, any layer within the blade and any layer of covering material or adhesive on a side used for striking the ball shall be continuous and of even thickness.

**14.6.** Slight deviations from continuity of surface or uniformity of color due to accidental damage or wear may be allowed provided that they do not significantly change the characteristics of the surface.

**14.7.** Before the start of a match and whenever he or she changes his or her racket during a match a player may be asked to show the racket to his or her opponent and the umpire the racket he or she is about to use and shall allow them to examine it.

**14.8.** ITTF has banned the use of all speed glues and or any substance designed to enhance the properties of the racket coverings.

**14.9.** Rackets may be inspected and/or tested at any time to show conformity to these and other ITTF regulations.

**14.10.** In the event that a racket is deemed to not comply then it will be confiscated and returned to the player at the end of the event. The said racket will then be checked again at the next event to ensure corrections have been made.

**Note: No racket gluing of any kind is allowed in any part of the gym premises.**



