

TABLE TENNIS GROUP - Report by Peter Singer



Our table tennis sessions at Teesdale Leisure Centre continued through December, apart from the Friday after Christmas, as unsurprisingly a number of members were away or otherwise occupied in festive activities and family gatherings. We resumed on 3 January, which was a good way to start to lose some of the recently acquired weight and to banish any New Year hangovers. Our delayed Christmas lunch on 9 January, which was a joint gathering with the pickleball group (as we have a number of common members – as well as members in common) probably undid some of the good work, but it was very enjoyable and the two groups didn't come to blows at any point. Returning to table tennis matters, the forehand smash is an exhilarating shot to play, especially when it works and you win the point, leaving your opponent stranded. But how to do it? The key elements are:

- ~ wait for a ball that is coming quite high over the net
- ~ your bat should be in a high position and you should aim to hit the ball at the top of its bounce or at shoulder height
- ~ rotate your body to the right from the hip, with your weight on the back foot
- ~ rotate your hips and shoulders forwards, transferring your weight to the front foot and moving forward with the shot, hitting the ball downwards and in front of you (ideally over the net)
- ~ accelerate the forearm slightly as you make contact with the ball, similar to doing a military salute
- ~ if the shot is successful, don't relax and admire it, as the ball may be lobbed back and you will have to do it all over again.

Table tennis is essentially an attacking game, so this is a good shot to try to master. Inevitably, it takes practice, so there will be a certain amount of smash-miss-smash-miss-swear-moan, but it is worth persevering for the buzz of a well-executed, winning shot. Honestly!

If you would like to join our group to learn the game, improve your skills or just enjoy playing and socialising, please contact Peter Singer (pandjsinger@btinternet.com 07508 663998). All are welcome, whether you play regularly, have not played for some time or have never played before.

