



Building Teamwork and Sportsmanship ...

... through School-based Foosball Clubs & Teams

A. Why Start a Foosball Program in Your School?

- 1. Student Interest** - It's FUN, Challenging, Competitive, and Rewarding!
- 2. Connecting with Students** – Educators understand that connecting with students 'outside' the classroom, often enhances student performance 'inside' the classroom. When students sense that the adults in their lives genuinely care about them, not just as students, but as people, they are more likely to behave in a cooperative manner, and less likely to cause difficulties in the classroom.
- 3. Create Team Mentality** - The Foosball Program can become a 'home' for some students who do not feel comfortable in the traditional team sports environment. Also, the program becomes a 'team' for the 5th & 6th grade students, prior to being eligible for the traditional Modified sports teams, which generally begins in 7th grade.
- 4. Equal Opportunity for Male & Female Players** – Foosball is a sport in which male and female players can compete at an equal level during the middle school and high school years. Strength and size are not defining factors when competing in foosball.
- 5. Life-Long Recreation** - Foosball can be a life-long recreational activity. Numerous national and international foosball organizations exist to promote the sport. Find listing of foosball tournaments at <http://www.ifptour.com>, and at Foosball.com.

B. Which 'Starting Point' is Best for Your School?

Selecting the most appropriate starting point for your program is essential. Below are some strategies that have been used successfully in other districts.

1. After School Enrichment Program:

a. Goals & Activities Associated with the Enrichment Program:

1. Learn the rules of competitive foosball
2. Basic skills instruction
3. Develop various styles of play
4. Learn to play singles and doubles
5. Study professional players by watching DVDs and online tutorials
6. Play lots and lots of foosball
7. Participate in local 'in-house' tournaments
8. Compete in competitions between different schools

b. Student / Table Ratio:

Experience has shown that one (1) table can be adequate for six (6) players, however, we recommend starting a program with at least two (2) tables and a program with no more than ten (10) students at one time. The goal is engage all students and minimize 'down-time' between games.

One table with six students would likely result in students playing only doubles, in to keep all students engaged. Having two tables would allow some opportunity for participants to play singles as well as doubles, without standing and watching for too long.

c. Establishing an Atmosphere of Learning and Skill Development:

It is essential to establish the proper foundation for any program. Students will enjoy the game of foosball more once they learn to play skillfully, and according to a set of standard rules (See ITSF Rules)

NOTE: The goals and activities of an Enrichment Program are similar to those of a Foosball Club, with the difference being in the structure of meetings, and the openness or restrictiveness of membership.

2. Foosball Club:

A formal school club is a significant mark of recognition and stability within the context of a school district. Formal clubs always require approval from the building and / or district administration, and often require approval from the Board of Education.

a. Club Advisors – Paid or Unpaid – Every school club must have a club advisor. This advisor position might come with a stipend, or it may be strictly voluntary. In order to launch your first Foosball Club, the advisor might need to be willing to serve as an unpaid advisor for a season.

b. Program Goals / Activities

1. Learn the rules of competitive foosball
2. Basic skills instruction
3. Develop various styles of play
4. Learn to play singles and doubles
5. Study professional players by watching DVDs and online tutorials
6. Play lots and lots of foosball
7. Participate in local 'in-house' tournaments
8. Maintain the school foosball tables in good working order.
9. Compete in competitions between different schools, if this can be arranged.
10. Travel, as a club / team, to regional tournaments organized by larger foosball organizations.

3. Foosball Team:

A Foosball Team would have many features of a Foosball Club. However, a school team would generally be organized under the school's Athletic Department, have a paid coach, and would compete in a schedule of interscholastic matches and competitions. In the United States, all school sports teams operate under the oversight of the National Federation of Highschool Sports (NFHS).

Foosball is not presently recognized as a NFHS sanctioned sport. However, Foosball Clubs USA is working toward that eventual goal.

C. Challenges and Considerations:

Introducing a foosball table and / or program to your school does present some unique challenges. Here are just a few of the most common that we have encountered:

- 1. Location:** Where are the tables going to be housed, played, and stored when not in use?
- 2. Timing & Access to Tables:** When will the tables be played on, and who has access to them? Are the balls kept in the tables? If not, are they managed by a supervising staff member? Or, may students sign them out for the Main Office?
- 3. Supervision:** Does supervision need to be provided for every time the tables are played on? If so, who will provide this supervision? If not, on what occasions will students be allowed to play on the tables without direct supervision, and how do you ensure the tables are not misused?

4. Selecting and Securing Tables:

- a. **Playability & Quality** – In order to interest students in a foosball program that will last, they need to be playing on tables that will allow them to actually control the ball, play properly, and have fun. There are many foosball tables made for the recreational ‘home’ market that do not have the playability or durability needed to heavy school or youth center usage.

The brands which Foosball Clubs USA recommends are those recognized by the International Table Soccer Federation, and readily available in the United states. These tables include; Bonzini, Tornado, and Warrior.

A full list of ITSF recognized tables is available at:

<https://www.tablesoccer.org/page/official-table-partners>

- b. **New Tables** – You can normally expect to pay between \$600 - \$2,000 for a decent quality table. Some coin operated models will cost even more.

Foosball Clubs USA has secured excellent pricing from the USA manufacturers, on tables being purchased by schools, youth centers, or organized youth development programs.

Contact Foosball Clubs USA for information on special pricing for schools or youth programs.

- c. **Used Tables** – Quality tables are available through sites such as Craig’s list or eBay, and at local yard or estate sales. One benefit of using a site such as Craig’s list is that the seller is generally from the surrounding geographic area, thus making pick-up simpler than arranging for delivery or shipping from far away.

Care must be taken in selecting used tables, since the vast majority of tables for sale are not the high quality ITSF recognized brands and models. Before purchasing a used foosball table, you should have an experienced foosball player evaluate the condition of the table to determine if it is a good purchase.

Donated or Loaner tables can sometimes be secured from local foosball players, especially if they are connected with the school or are helping you establish your program.

D. Start Well – Play Well:

1. **Know the Rules:** The International Table Soccer Federation (ITSF) has established rules by which most foosball is played today. You don't need to get into all the finer details associated with full tournament play, however, it would be beneficial to start your players off with a basic understanding of the most elementary rules of play.

Rules can be found at:

https://www.tablesoccer.org/rules/documents/ITSF_RULES_short_version_A3.pdf

Most of the ITSF Basic Rules will apply to even casual play, such as club and lunchtime games. Some rules, such as the coin toss, time-outs, and switching sides can be reserved for actual tournaments.

2. **Teach the rules:** Provide initial instruction in the proper rules of foosball. Then, post rules near the tables, and insist on students following the most basic rules, in order to preserve the quality and integrity of your foosball program.

E. Get Connected – Stay Connected:

1. Foosball Clubs USA exists to promote and support youth development programs, such as school-based foosball activities and those run through an organized community youth center.

Services provided by Foosball Clubs USA are:

- a. Help setting up the right program for your situation.
 - b. Documentation from other programs to help you learn from the success of others.
 - c. Tournament Organization.
 - d. Securing quality tables
 - e. Guidelines for running After School and Lunch-time programs.
2. View top players and learn from the best. Many good instructional materials are available free of charge, by looking on foosball related websites. Many helpful YouTube videos are available for use in group or individual instruction.
 3. Connect with the broader Foosball Community, by regularly visiting the following websites:
 - a. Foosball Clubs USA: <http://foosballclubsusa.com/index.html>
 - b. United State Table Soccer Organization (USTSO): <http://usafoosball.com/>
 - c. International Table Soccer Federation (ITSF): <https://www.tablesoccer.org/>
 - d. International Foosball Promotions: (IFP): <http://ifptour.com/>
 - e. Inside Foos: <http://insidefoos.com/>

F. Take the Next Step:

Each situation is unique. Together we can identify some approaches to explore in bringing foosball to your school.

Visit: Foosballclubsusa.com
E-mail: foosballclubsusa@gmail.com
Call: John O'Brien at 315-430-2179.