



School-Based Foosball Clubs

**Building Teamwork and Sportsmanship
through Student Engagement!**



1. Introduction:

A. Why Start a Foosball Program in Your School?

1. **Student Engagement** – Foosball provides a new avenue for schools to connect with certain students. Many students do not participate in the current school activities of traditional sports, music, or clubs. Yet, many of these same students are drawn to a foosball program.
2. **Building Bridges** – Foosball has the potential to bring together students who don't otherwise belong to the same school activities. Staff members and parents can also participate WITH students through community centered foosball activities.
3. **Create Team Mentality** - The Foosball Program can become the 'team' for those students not involved in other school sports, due to age, interest, or time restrictions. Some students are too young to be involved in traditional school sports. Others cannot commit the time required by school sports teams. Yet these same students could participate in a school Foosball Club, that allows younger players, and does not have the same time commitments as a traditional school sports team.
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.

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

1. After School / Out of School - Enrichment Program
2. Foosball Club / Team
3. Lunch Program, Student Lounge, Community Space
4. Special Event
5. Physical Education Unit

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
2. Timing & Access to Tables
3. Supervision / Instruction
4. Program Content
5. Selecting and Securing Tables

2. Details and Explanations: Practical suggestions, based upon the experience of existing school programs.

A. Documentation Related to Student Engagement

Positive Effects of Extra Curricular Activities on Students:

<https://dc.cod.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1370&context=essai#:~:text=The%20positive%20effects%20that%20extracurricular,adults%2C%20and%20a%20social%20aspect.>

The Effects of Extracurricular Activities on the Academic Performance of Junior High Students:

<https://www.kon.org/urc/v5/fujita.html>

Nearly 6 Out of 10 Children Participate in Extracurricular Activities – US Census Bureau Reports:

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2014/cb14-224.html>

(We include this article to emphasize that 40% of students are NOT involved in extracurricular activities, even given the many good activities offered by schools. Foosball Clubs USA has demonstrated that many of these students become meaningfully connected with school foosball programs.)

Review the REFERENCES at the end of these articles for more information on the connection between the academic and social benefits of student involvement in extracurricular activities.

B. Which Starting Point:

1. After School / Out of 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, if possible.

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 to engage all students and minimize 'down-time' between games.

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

c. Establishing an Atmosphere of Learning, Mutual Support, and Skill Development:

It is essential to establish the proper foundation for any program. Creating a 'team' mentality, with the goal of mutual skill development, will teach students to appreciate the improvement of their peers, as well as themselves. By focusing on fair play, understanding the basic rules, and progressive skill development, students will learn to play skillfully, and as responsible members of the larger foosball community. (See ITSF Rules)

2. Foosball Club / Team:

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. This Foosball Club could also serve as a Foosball Team, if competitive interscholastic opportunities exist.

- 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.
- b. Program Goals / Activities (Note: most goals are the same as for the After School Program. **New items in bold**)
 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, if this can be arranged.
 9. **Maintain the school foosball tables in good working order.**
 10. **Travel, as a club / team, to regional tournaments organized by larger foosball organizations.**

3. Lunch Program, Student Lounge, Community Space:

Providing a foosball activity in a lunch room, student lounge, or in a community space open to students, can be both rewarding and challenging. These settings generally do NOT allow or provide for direct instruction, but are provided as recreational in nature.

Some guidelines that help make these 'unstructured' settings run smoothly are:

- a. The existence of a structured foosball class or program in the school, where players receive clear instruction.
- b. Posting of ITSF Short Rules: https://www.tablesoccer.org/rules/documents/ITSF_RULES_short_version_A3.pdf
- c. Posted guidelines governing the format of play so that as many students as possible gain access to the table(s), in the limited time available. (See Short Games, and Other Helpful Strategies)
- d. System for controlling access to the table, or use of the balls. This system needs to be clearly described and governed by the school staff / administration.
- e. System for the care and maintenance of the table. This system needs to be understood by school staff and players.

C. Challenges and Considerations:

In this section we raise some important questions, that much be answered by each school / program for itself. We also offer some helpful ideas, suggestions, and recommendations, where suitable.

1. Location: Where are the tables going to be housed, played on, and stored when not in use?

- a. School cafeteria - This location enables the tables to be used during lunch periods as well as during After School Programs, or by the Foosball Club / Team.
- b. Foyer / Lobby area – This location enables students to play on the tables before and after school, as well as selected times during the day, without interrupting activities in other rooms.
- c. Student Lounge – Housing tables in a Student Lounge provides an additional activity in a setting that already has an established routine and protocol for student use.
- d. Classroom – Some schools choose to house their foosball table in the classroom of the Club Advisor.
- e. Gym / Physical Education Space – When schools choose to offer foosball as an activity in their gym / physical education program, the tables could be housed in the gym or storage facility of the physical education department.

2. Timing & Access to Tables:

- a. When will the tables be played on?
- b. Who has access to the tables?
- c. Are the balls kept in the tables? If not, are they managed by a supervising staff member? Or, may students sign them out from the Main Office, or other central location?

3. Supervision / Instruction:

- a. Supervision - Is staff supervision needed for students to use tables? 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?
- b. Who will provide instruction on proper game play and rules? Is there a staff member, who also plays foosball, who will serve as Club Advisor, After School Class instructor, lunch program monitor? If not, is there a plan for equipping and training staff for this role.

NOTE: Foosball Clubs USA is developing instructional material for 'non-players', as well as experienced foosball players, to prepare them for organizing and running youth foosball programs.

4. Selecting and Securing Tables:

- a. Playability & Quality – Quality foosball tables are essential in order to interest students in a quality foosball program. Students need to be playing on tables that will allow them to control the ball, play properly, and have fun. Many foosball tables made for the recreational 'home' market that do not have the playability or durability needed to handle the heavy usage of a school or youth center.

Foosball Clubs USA recommends those tables recognized by the International Table Soccer Federation, and readily available in the United States. These tables include; Bonzini, Leonhart, Roberto Sport, 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 \$1,000 - \$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. Operating through Foosball Clubs USA, these same quality tables can be secured for between \$650 - \$1,000.

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, facebook marketplace, and other peer-to-peer sites, as well as at local yard or estate sales. One benefit of using a local site for used items, 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. Always have an experienced individual check the quality of the table before committing to a purchase.

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.

3. Know the Rules / Teach the Rules:

A. 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.

B. 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.

4. Get Connected & Locate Resources:

A. Foosball Organizations:

1. Foosball Clubs USA: <http://foosballclubsusa.com/index.html>
2. United State Table Soccer Organization (USTSO): <http://usafoosball.com/>
3. International Table Soccer Federation (ITSF): <https://www.tablesoccer.org/>
4. Research local and state foosball / table soccer clubs and organizations.
5. International Foosball Promotions: (IFP): <http://ifptour.com/>

B. Tutorials, Instructional Material and Training Devices:

1. Free Online Videos
2. Inside Foos: <http://insidefoos.com/>
3. ITSF Education: <https://www.tablesoccer.org/page/education>
4. FoosFit: <https://wefoos.com/foosfit-1200.html>
5. Foos Train Systems
6. Rod Locks

5. Take the Next Step:

Each situation is unique. Together we can identify strategies for bringing foosball to your school.

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